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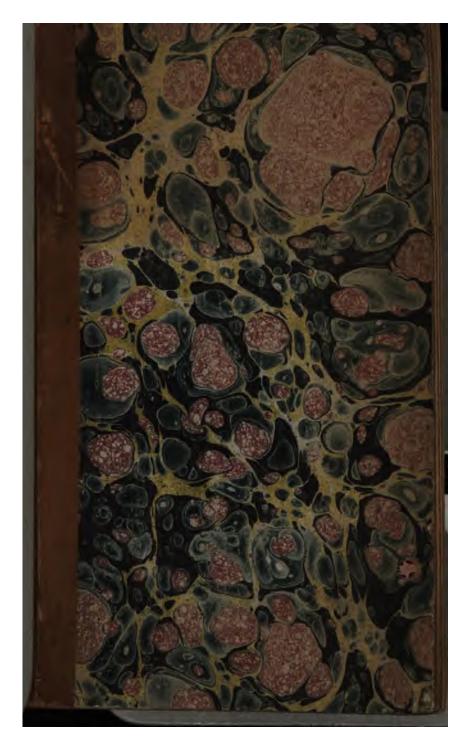
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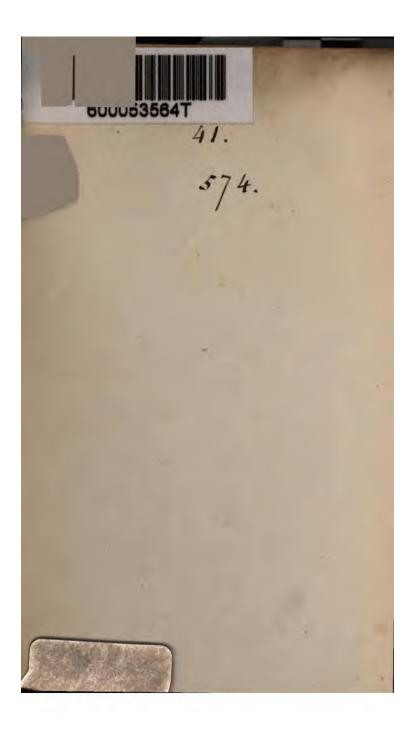
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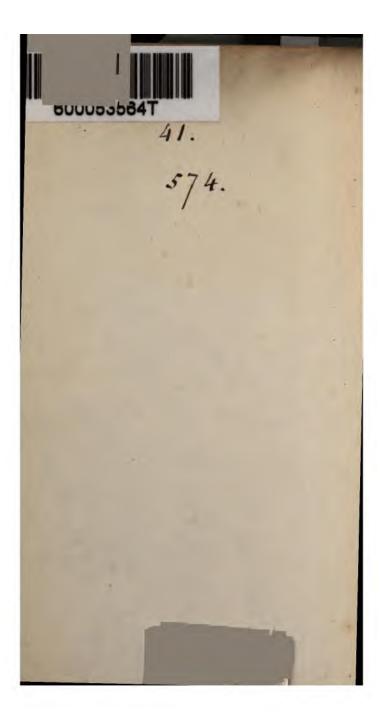
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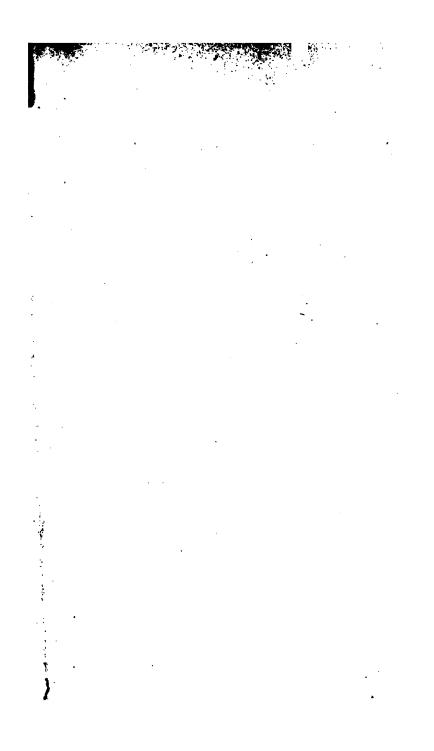
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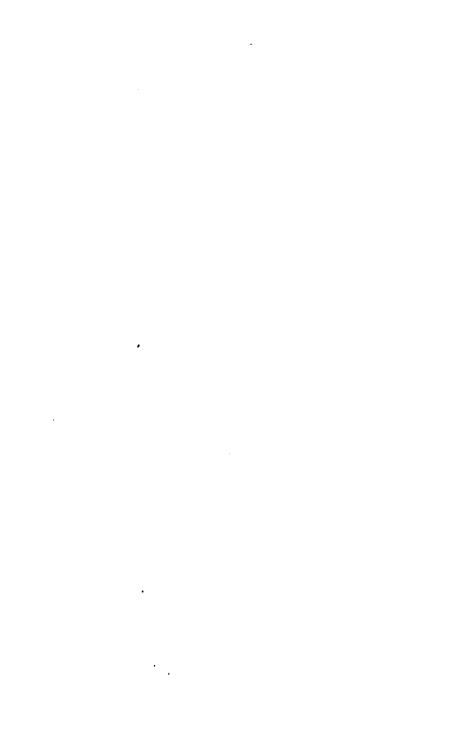












# THE DEMAGOGUE.



THE DEMAGOGUE.

# A COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.



Were things but only called by their right name, Cæsar himself would be ashamed of fame.

Lord Byron.

# LONDON:

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574.



# PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Mr. QUORUM, the Demagogue.

- MIRAFAIR, in love with Belinda.
- WHINE, an idle Gentleman.
- STIPEND, nephew-in-law of Mrs. Quorum.
- HOMETHRUST, relative of Mr. Quorum.
  UPBRAID, landlord of the Bacchanals.
  PROUL, servant of Mr. Quorum.
  LOITER, servant of Mr. Mirafair.
  APT, servant of Mr. Quorum.

Mrs. QUORUM, wife of Mr. Quorum.

— STIPEND, niece of Mrs. Quorum.
BELINDA, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Quorum.
BIDDY, servant of Mr. Quorum.

SCENE, LONDON.



ERRATA.

Page 11, line 18, for know, read knew.

43, 28, for Mr. Quorum, read Mrs. Quorum.

31, for Perkins Warbeck, read Perkin Warbeck.

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# THE DEMAGOGUE.

### ACT I.

SCENE I.—THE PARLOUR OF THE BACCHANALS.

Upbraid, Proul, and a Mixed Company.

Upbraid. Nay, you are one of those whose mind is so crooked, that you must be spoken to in *Italics*. You shall have a full-length picture ere I have done with you: for when the body is in proportion to the head, the painter becomes the clipper of his own genius by drawing a half-length figure.

Proul. Well, well, now that you have drawn the bust, you may substitute any body's arms and legs when my back is turned: other great geniuses have set you the example. I could name you a royal artist who always enfranchises his ladies of ton as soon as he arrives at the tops of their shoulders, and positively never went beyond a lady's bosom in the

whole course of his brilliant career—in her presence.

Upb. I shall not argue as to the propriety of drawing the picture, as I am certain the original will be hanged and drawn before he dies, and quartered afterwards. But, right or wrong, it must be sketched, even at this sitting—so to my easel. You found fault with my Burton ale before you tasted it: it was thick, muddy, forsooth, ere you gave it time to settle and become clear; and sat in judgment on its flavor when your palate was prejudiced against it by sweetmeats. My brandy you pronounced weak before you drank sufficiently of it to qualify you to judge of its strength; and when your guilty conscience denied you sleep o' nights, your morning salutation to your landlord was, "Wastebutt, (or some such delicate name) the maid did but half make my bed;" when, perhaps, the real cause of complaint against the lass merely amounted to-but let that pass. In a word, I shall grow corpulent by such a lodger.

Proul. More than I shall while I have such a landlord. No, no, you preface your roast beef too often and too much with Yorkshire pudding. Any one of your guests who aspires to play Falstaff must have baskets, not "laughter, holding

both his sides."

Upb. And when you sit down to my ordinary, does your conscience ever whisper to you to make but an ordinary meal?

Proul. To stop your mouth, on such occasions I make

extra-ordinary meals.

*Upb.* Of my wife, too, you presumed to express your disapprobation while I was in the act of extolling her on her beauty and complimenting myself on my choice.

Proul. Although I could not admire your wife, I allowed you displayed great judgment in your choice. She wanted a husband, and you stood pretty much in need of a fair defect, coupled with some hundreds, which you accepted as eagerly as ever a knight of the shire (who was stepping into place and profit) did Alfred's Chiltern Hundreds. So, as you had bried two wives already, you vainly imagined that the third would follow the example which her predecessors in office had set before her eyes.

Upb. But above all, you are so uproarious when you get

drunk.

Proul. I lose and you profit by my being intoxicated. A drunkard is like a gamester's die, that twirls and twirls, and becomes motionless at last, merely, it would seem, that the sober, sensible part of the world might behold how one man is benefited by another's ruin.

Upb. But why disparage my goods? If you find fault with my liquor, it is but natural for me to find fault with you when you become tipsy from drinking it: its use is to make you drunk; that once accomplished, it has done its part, and nobly.

Proul. [I must make it up with him.]—Well, I allow I

was the worse for liquor.

Upb. Again? Lay not the blame to that; for it was the liquor was the worse for you. And the cause of its taking any effect at all upon you is, that you sip it in drams, like a bashful maiden, when you should look it boldly in the face,

and drink it in pints like a man.

Proul. Well, I abused it merely because I was in a humour to do so, or rather out of humour. By your own showing, I took the only opportunity I could to find fault with your liquors, namely, before I gave them a fair trial: for when a man happens to get drunk, he cannot in truth say the brandy was weak, although it made him so. At last, having agreed, let us shake hands upon it; and, being hand in hand, one frame will do for both our pictures.

Upb. No, I must shake hands with your pocket first.

**Proul** Upbraid, my fine fellow, be quiet; for the way to keep the house over your head is to keep your tongue the quietest thing in it.

Upb. Ay, and you would leave the house over my head, but it would be by pulling the roof down about my ears.

Proul. Well, I shall be obliged to pay you your bill tomorrow; I'll tell you why. I have got a new master since yesterday, and am determined to become a new man, and turn over a new leaf. Upb. Not in my book; you have not left a blank one from cover to cover.

Proul. You talk so much about your money, that I don't think you wish it paid: for by that you'd lose the pleasure of annoying me.

Upb. What! may not a man ask for his own?

Proul. No, to be sure; and if you would take the hint which Nature has given you, you would be all the richer for it. Man has two ears and but one tongue, which plainly signify that he should hear twice as much as he should speak; and reason farther convinces him of this truism, when, on reflection, he finds his ears always open, and his mouth comparatively seldom.

Upb. Hey, dey! how can a man hear if nobody speaks?

Proul. Fools babble their thoughts; but it is the wise man's part to pay attention to what they say, merely that he may avoid doing what they intend to do.

Upb. How comes it that women have but one tongue?

Proul. A woman's strength lies in her tongue as the strength of the whale lies in its tail, or that of the shark in

its teeth.

Upb. I would the women's strength lay in their teeth; we might then expect peace by degrees as they lost them. But to leave bantering, Proul, what have you to offer in extenuation of this bill? Do you even come and spend your ready money here, to appease my justly outraged temper? What

loop-hole have you left now to 'scape through?

Proul. You have been telling me of one out of which I shall hardly try to get. I told you I have got a new master; and, as it never rains but it pours, I think I have got an old master also: for I expect an old crony here soon; so, as you may get a new customer by such a chance, brighten up your inveterate bronze phiz, and imagine me to be every thing your pound shilling and pence imagination could wish me.

Upb. And is there really a prospect of my getting my absent

money back?

Proul. A certainty.

Upb. Is it a good place? I hope it is, for-

Proul. For my own sake, I saved you from saying.—It is a perfect sinecure: if I knew how to make my hands clean

without washing them, I need never wet my fingers.

Upb. What a fool am I now to take your word—I, who found your affidavy always so useless. You have sworn more oaths that I should be paid before now than are taken in both houses of parliament after a general election.

Enter Loiter, Proul shakes him molently by the hand.

Loiter. Zounds, Proul, you take my arm to be the pum

handle, do you?

Proul. I do not exactly suppose we are in the pump-room at Bath. But you are welcome, though with less ceremony. I found it confoundedly hard to kill time.

Loiter. May be you reckoned without your host.

Proul. My host did not reckon without me; for here has he been, for the last half hour, making figures of speech at my expense; and whenever I opened my mouth to make an objection, he threw the reckoning in my teeth. We can easily kill time now, for you will do for an accomplice.

Loiter. At that fun I should suppose your host a host in himself. I have known people pronounce damnation on others who committed suicide, yet think themselves very saints while devoutly employed in the harmless amusement of murdering time; but I could never find out the reason why they made a distinction between dead men and some members of their own family.

Upb. Gentlemen, as you may have some business to transact, I will not interrupt you. [Going.

Proul. Landlord, that you may not go empty handed, take this.

[Gining him the empty pot.

Upb. [partly aside.] No more upon the score, though.

Proul. No, to be sure.

Upb. Well, Mr. Proul, you will never learn manners, or you would surely pick up some in my decent house. You should ask the strange gentleman what he would choose to drink. Probably the last thing Mr. Loiter drank was wine; if so, ale will clean wash away all remembrance of the juice of the grape.—[To Loiter.] What, sir, would you please to patronise in the Bag o' Nails?

Loiter. Replenish this and pay yourself. [Throwing money. Upb. Instanter, sir, for your "replenish." You speak such silver-toned English, that I must answer you in Latin. [Exit.

Loiter. What did our landlord mean by the word score? Proul. O, merely going to tease us with an old witless

anecdote.

Loiter. What, a victualler want to tell anecdotes with an empty ale pot in his hand?

Proul. When the liquor's in, the wit's out; and, it follows of course, when the liquor's out, the wit's in.

Loiter. I think so, indeed, to want to dispose of his wit when he might be selling his ale.

Proul. O, it was by way of recommending his small beer.

Loiter. Then we'll indulge him in his "small drollery."

Proul. Now that he's balked, he'll not condescend a second time, I am sure.

Loiter. Do you ask him.

Proul. Zounds, I should as soon expect to get a drink of water, by asking for it, in Regent-street.

Loiter. What! not if you were fainting?

Proul. O, that is a fashionable malady; I meant if I were

dying of drought!

Loiter. How do you account for it that we never hear of a lady of quality being discovered in a fainting fit? The sex always contrive to have their lovers or their husbands at their

elbow at the frightful moment.

Proul. You would not have them fall when there was nobody present to take them up. No, no; that would be acting the doleful tragedy of which we read so often in the papers: She sinks to rise no more, instead of playing the very charming comedy of She stoops to conquer.

Loiter. But what is this precious joke?

Proul. Its drift is to tell why two X's were stamped upon barrels which held bad ale.

Loi. I understood they meant something out of the common.

Proul. A vulgar error. You recollect his last word was score.

Loiter. Not to a syllable. But you know there are some truths which we must believe, no matter who speak them.

Proul. You flatter. However, the tale is this: one X is numeral for ten; two X's, of course, stand for twenty; and twenty, all England over, is a score: so that as these good-for-nothing inn-keepers part with nothing that is good for any thing without money down, he merely wished to know whether the double X ale was to be scored up, or the good ale paid for on the nail.

Loiter. You were always famous for coming off with flying

colours at a pinch.

Proul. And the best way, too. When you are mounted on the box, though you may cut a finer figure on a common with your equipage, you display greater generalship by wheeling about in a blind alley, in which others of the craft could not find room to crack their whips.

[EnterWaiter with ale.]

Loiter. You did not stay long in your last place, Proul. Proul. No, and from a whimsical cause, too: My master

imported a crate of champagne, from France, "that never saw the eye of a gauger." He was so curious in the circumstance of unpacking it, that he would permit no one to touch it but himself, for a reason well known to every one

that knew him and me. So to work he went, and took all or save the last layer, which he mistook for the bottom, and the handed the crate to your humble servant, who took it, as is duty bound, for his perquisite of place. I found four doze, and nothing the worse for being the dregs of the crate. In the ordinary course of affairs, my modesty would not approprise more than six bottles to my own particular palate; whereas, by this accident, I had forty-two over my usual stint, and practised no roguery either. I being merrier than usual for the ensuing month, the old curmudgeon smelt the less of the wine, and discharged me accordingly.—It is so long since I saw any one from your house, that I have as many questions to ask as an illiterate critic. Know you anything of our late fellow servant, Appropriate?

Loiter. He's a black sheep, and died in the grain.

Proul. Died in the wool, you mean.

Loiter. Were government to take a lesson from the game of Speculation, and make the gentry of England pay an extra tax for every knave found in their possession, they might take off the ordinary servant duty, and raise the wages of honest men.

Proul. What is the use of censure? Many a man, who carries his head high in the world, and who blushes not while accusing others, would wear his hat far down on his eyes were his own crimes written on his forehead.

Loiter. But to the order of the day. As my master was riding near Kensington Gardens, yesterday afternoon, he met a lady on horseback whom he never beheld before, and with whom he instantly and unreasonably fell in love. He perceived that she was attended by you as her groom; and, as you were formerly in the same capacity with him, he has sent me to seek you out, that he may devise means to attain her hand in marriage.

Proul. O, ho! then he was wide awake when he condescended to bestow on me that nod of recognition.

Loiter. And so he has continued, for he never closed his eyes since.

*Proul.* Does he remember that he turned me off once, and without a character too?

Loiter. As he could not give you a good one without making his own a bad one, what could he do? 'Tis the servant that gives himself the character, the master is merely the clerk on the occasion.

Proul. Ay, but he should have characters at command, when required. In this large theatre, the world, we know not

how or when we shall meet after we have once parted; and a man of the world should be like a dramatist, who does not dispose of all his characters till he arrives at the last scene of his play. His play has taken rather an awkward turn just now; so you may tell him, from me, to get who he can to support his character, for I will not take his part. Besides, I have heard he has grown a worse master than ever.

Loit. Were man as anxious to do what is good
As hungry pigeons are to reach their home;
And were he swift of foot as they're of wing

In tending on the varying wants of man,

There still would be some envious grudging fiends Who would more willingly dispraise than praise him.

Proul. I warrant you now, he'd welcome me with a very pleasing face, and probably a chair. Like a dog which you

want to throw into the river, he'd bow and scrape-

Loiter. And, out of pure politeness, you would say, he'd give you the preference of a ducking. But I know that before. Proul. I know that to flourish in life and encompass our desires in the world, we ought to wear a perpetual smile on our countenance: we should reverse the order of nature and fawn on the very dog. This is a lesson that man is taught every day by a child. Observe the urchin clandestinely seated behind a carriage: he wears a pleasing face for every one he passes by; and the cur-dog (with an act of parliament swinging from his neck) that follows the coach and barks at him, shares the sweetest looks which he is capable of screwing his face into. But the agreeable smiler I speak of never enjoys what he possesses. He is in the constant expectation of the frown of every body he meets in front, and trembles in instantaneous fear of the lash from behind. He is also obliged to shift his quarters whenever the vehicle halts; and expects every stage to be his last, without arriving at the termination of his journey; and, in the end, is too often compelled to take to the road—sometimes with a broken limb, seldom without a whipping.

Proul. We agree as to generals, and differ a trifle as to particulars. To be on a good footing with a man, you certainly should set your watch by his watch, closely observe its movements, and brazen the very sun out of the firmament should either watch go wrong. Well, I suppose I must submit; and probably the first service which my old master will require me to perform will be the very one which will disqualify me from receiving a good character from my new master.

Exeunt.

### SCRNE II .- MIRAFAIR'S LIBRARY.

Mirafair and Mr. Whine-his leg bandaged.

Whine. What! shut up among your books; buried amid

the worm-eaten trash of antiquity.

Mirafair. Rather, entomed among all that the worms canot entirely destroy; for, like the phœnix, they spring to like anew out of their own ashes, while their sisters, Painting and Sculpture, fade away, and leave the world no copy.—An unpleasant morning, Mr. Whine.

Whine. As usual, the weather—the weather; the grand topic of an Englishman's conversation. However, there will always be variety in such a subject, so long as the wind does not remain in one point. Why, it is a downright insult w his understanding to tell a man what his own senses previously inform him. If the weather be frosty, he feels the cold in the tips of his fingers the moment he rubs his eves of a morning; if wet, his olfactories discover an unpleasantness at the first kennel he approaches; if sultry, he tastes a sourness in his morning draught of ale; if there be a fog (in which he is obliged to grope his way), it is "darkness visible;" and should it thunder, he can't get any louder information of it than what he hears. Thus, his five senses give him all the information he requires concerning the weather; and his last (though too often his least) sense—his common sense, confirms him in the belief that they are correct. It was only bearable in the old guardians of the night: after waking a man out of a pleasing slumber, they, with some face (though, indeed, an extremely bad one) might atone for their impertinent communicativeness, by adding the state of the weather to the hour—but from a friend.

Mirafair. But how was that fault excusable in a common watchman which is unpardonable in an esteemed friend?

Whine. From the exquieite delight arising from the knowledge that he himself was in the midst of his "four o'clock and a cloudy morning."

Mirafair. My friend Whine, other affairs besides the wea-

ther occupy my thoughts at present.

Whine. Then I am satisfied. You admit you spoke without thinking, consequently, your assertion is almost excusable. Do you believe me, I would rather remain silent a whole visit than address you now and say, A fine day, sir; a very fine day this.

Mirafair. And better too; for this being a very wet day,

silence would be preferable to such a compliment.

Whine. My dear friend, I don't speak particularly of this

day; you understand me too much. However, I did not come to quarrel with you; but, to keep conversation alive, I have brought with me a pocket of inventions, which are crammed as closely together as a pocket of hops. I made them solely that I might have "something" to discourse with my friends about; and I intend now to submit them to your inspection; but only on condition that you will not say I invented them for the public good, for you are already aware how thoroughly I despise—the world.

Mirafair. I think I may venture to acquiese in your terms. Whine. But, at the same time, I require your serious, cri-

tical, and impartial judgment.

Mirafair. You shall have it [though I should weep, for my own indiscretion, while passing sentence upon them]. Your modesty alone keeps a monument from being erected

to you in your lifetime.

Whine. A monument! my very particular friend. Who, in our time, but the great Herschel has had one worthy of the name? His is a monument—one worth seeking for: as it is to be found wherever and whenever you choose to behold it—except, of course, when this ball of earth of ours obtrudes itself between our optics and it. Go to any country in the world, or any world in the universe, perhaps—there it is to be seen, and once seen, admired for ever; but have one built in Westminster Abbey, and to either see it or admire it, you must travel some thousands of miles from some parts of the globe, and pay handsomely afterwards to view what you paid dearly before to erect. Ah, Herschel's is the one to my taste; and he, poor man, was obliged to find it out himself, else, I believe, one so noble and so lasting would hardly have been found for him.

Mirafair. Most certainly the monument a man erects to himself is the most durable; but the statue is too seldom admired till it is too late to reward the merit it records.

Whine. True; but let us examine these, and, if we can, laud them; for monuments speak for themselves, and always in praise of those whose names they bear—living or dead.

Mirafuir. What have you done with your Memoirs of Napoleon?

Whine. Ah, there was a noble mind for you—a man that will never be forgotten.

Mir. Never—not even by those who do not remember him. Whine. We ought to thank Heaven for permitting us to live in the time of such a man.

Mirafair. Certainly we ought to thank Heaven for allowing us to live in his time.

Whine. Plague on your reading of a man's meaning. It did not, however, die the death of a hero: like Turenne at St. Ruth, he should have been blown from one world to be other by a cannon ball. Hannibal, Pompey, and Marlborous should also have died as they lived—great general officerable first effort of my imagination is a thought in the shaped a funnel showing it. By means of this curious little instruent, a patient may swallow a nauseous dose of physic a bitter pill with as sweet and as placid a countenance as the physician wears who prescribes it. Of the originality of this there can be no doubt; and if it be but put far enough out of sight, the medicine it conveys can never offend the taste.

Mirafair. If it be but put far enough, as you say, it may do. Like sending convicts beyond sea; though, perhaps, they do no good there, being out of our sight, they can do no

harm at home.

Whine. Well, notwithstanding, I will not transport this till

I first try what good it may do at home.

Mirafair. By no means condemn it before you give it a fair trial. But I think they have something like this for physicing horses; and are you not apprehensive that the malicious world will call a man imitating a horse something of a

name closely resembling that of an ass?

Whine. O, then any that are so mulish, as to be afraid of the sneers of the envious, may still continue grinning at, shrugging at, and sipping their medicine, as though it were poison they were about to swallow.—Here is a Commentary on the Dramas of Shakspeare. At one time he tells that no traveller returns from the other world; while, ten minutes before, the buried Majesty of Denmark arrives post from thence.

Mirafair. Although the Ghost comes, it brings no intelligence from the place which it has left; and consequently cannot be called a traveller, for what is a traveller without news?

Whine. Then you think information makes up the traveller?
Mirafair. Though a modern Mandeville may not bring any
true news out of the country he has traversed, you never find
him bringing any relating to the country to which he returns.

Whine. Indeed, it is wonderful the Ghost says as much as it does. Every conversation held between the two Hamlets should be in one of the dead languages. Then the Ghost would be quite at ease, which, from the hurry it evinces to be off, it is pretty evident it is not. Apropos, have you seen the tame Shakspeare that has been, some time ago, let loose upon the world?

Mirafair. No; I would as soon look upon the skeleton of

my first love as upon that of my first poet.

Whine. O, I am told it is a truly edifying work.

Mirafair. I doubt it not. I dare say the pruner or adapter, or arranger has made Mistress Doll Tearsheet what the author describes her to be, "an honest, virtuous, civil gentlewoman." Understand me, however. Although I am an ardent admirer of Shakspeare, I do not coincide with him in every thing he advances. I could not find any sweetness in adversity when I was compelled to part with my library, and his works the most brilliant gem of the collection.

Whine. I could find a great deal on a somewhat similar occasion. The shifts I underwent to preserve inviolate my study were sweet in the extreme. However, now that his Pegasus has been put into Harness, to suit the easy stagers of this age, the next may expect to have him in leading strings.

—Now for an optical discovery [showing a glass.] By the aid of this, you may perceive a tree shoot out its buds in March, its blossoms in April, its leaves in May, and its fruit in June, one thousand eight hundred and forty-one times faster than it does in reality.

Mirafair. Amazing perspicacity! As your magnifier multiplies the progress of the leaves of a tree in their growth, I

suppose it does not abandon them in their fall.

Whine. To observe their evolutions in Autumn, you must reverse the glass. This morning, I sat in my summer-house, admiring the rapidity with which the leaves of a laurel tree sprang forth. They were at first an immeasurable distance from me; but with the help of my glass, I drew them closer and closer still to my eye, till at length they grew so rapidly, that they reached my head, and encircled my temples.

Mirafair. That is famous; but still it is a glass, a mere glass; and, like all other glasses (except, indeed, drinking glasses) it brings objects nearer to the view in fancy than

they ever will be in reality.

Whine. Then if my wreath of laurel will not come to me, I will go to it, as Mahomet did to his mountain.—This is the drawing of a fire-engine. It has no pretensions to originality, being only an improvement on the one in general use; but if it be well worked—

Mirafuir. It will play as well as the best of them.—What will the march of information arrive at? It has certainly

gone very far.

Whine. Far? It has descended to the very waters, and the fish have condescended to be instructed. They appear to dispute their right of freedom with man, and pass by his bait as though they seemed to say, We have heard of your

fool and maggot. But I fancy that the march of intellect is still too much for the swim of intellect; as, I flatter myself that I have nearly completed a half-natural half-artificial line and bait for angling. They may be thus described. placing a large garden spider on the top of a rod, and letting him suspend himself by his web, both will form an admirable, nay, an irresistible allurement; the web being so fine and o closely resembling the colour of the stream, the fish cannot perceive it; and a spider being such an extraordinary animal to meet on an aquatic excursion, many fish will bite at him for the sake of novelty. This is the mere outline. now only remains to be considered by what means the web can be made as strong as gut, and also what inducement the spider will have to remain upon the surface of the water; for a spider would not stay in his own cobweb did he not look with expectancy, every now and then, for a rather lengthy visit from a travelling fly.

Miraf. Why, your line being so very weak, it will require so much more skill in you to play the fish to shore, and, consequently, considerably increase the pleasures of angling. to keeping the spider on the water, you may fish where others are fishing, drop your spider among your neighbours' flies. and, my life on it, he will follow his old vocation, and become naturalized to the water, or perhaps amphibious in time. Should he not deem the artificial flies interesting enough to detain him on the water, after he finds out their hard-heartedness, he will remain without any inducement at all. which manœuvre, you will have a double chance of success: for if the fish do not take a fancy to the spider, the unlettered portion (if I may so term them) of the finny tribe may bite at the fly; and you then, by lowering your arm, may elevate your rod, and seize upon your fellow auglers' fish and flies. It will be curious to observe the fish and spider contending for the fly; and when each attempts to decamp with its steelhearted deceiver and worthless prey-one to the element of water and the other to the element of air-to find themselves both held fast together by the hook, on terra firma in Europe.

Whine. But the strength of the cobweb line is the most material consideration.

Mirafair. And I can already perceive there is not much difficulty in accomplishing it: for as the web is by nature sufficiently strong to hold a spider, all that is required of art is—merely to make it tough enough to hold a fish extra.

Whine. It certainly may succeed in the hand of a true poetic angler, who gently skims a clear, limpid, lucid, mean-

dering stream without damping the feathers or slackening the pinions of his fly's wings. One who delicately glides his rod and appendages o'er a brook, as a harlequin figures his wand on the stage, and accomplishes his object on the instant and by the touch. But I fear its government and conduct will never be grappled by the comprehension of one of those Billingsgate fishermen, who plunges his pole suddenly into the water, and frightens the fish out of the very mud which he rakes from the bottom, and into which he had previously chased them. No, it will not be understood by the vulgar fish surpriser, who flourishes his rod in the air, and, with all his agility and might dashes it into the rivulet, resembling nothing on earth, except a great lubberly thrasher wielding his flail in a barn !- Now allow me to show you a singular selfacting pair of snuffers. By appending these to the pendulum of a table clock, your taper will be illumined for you every quarter of an hour; so that of a cold winter night you need not put your hand outside the blankets, and yet read by the clear light of your wax taper, till the sun makes your candle "hide its diminished head."

Mirafair. They cannot wholly fail of success: for though they may not be immediately adopted by novel-readers, or light reading people generally, all those who use portable and

laughing gas will patronise them.

Whine. And, to crown all, here is an instrument by which a frizzier or perruquier may cut hair in such a manner that all the organs of the pericranium will be perceivable without feeling for the bumps. A head, thus studded with information and scientifically brushed up, will be found to be extremely communicative, and exceedingly useful, as well as highly ornamental. Thus you may avoid being murdered when you meet a Thurtel in company, by shunning his society.

Mirafair. The critics will quere the newness of that idea;

they will trace it to the faculty.

Whine. And so they may, for aught I care. The surgeons and barbers were in partnership, or both professions in one, at a late period of our history; and why may not the barbers now profit by the labours of the surgeons? I dare say there remains a balance unsettled between them.

Mirafair. But what other sign of madness is that you have

nursing, or rather hatching, in your leg?

Whine. It was this leg that brought me here this morning.

Mirafair. With some considerable assistance from the other, I presume; or rather the other, with some trifling assistance from it, for it seems to be the less able of the two.

Whine. No matter which; say both, if you please. As I walked down Pall-mall yesterday morning, in peace with all the world and myself; grateful for every blessing which Providence has bestowed upon man; happy as affluence and friends could make me; envying none and pitying all who needed compassion; satisfied with the climate and geographical position of our "envy of surrounding nations;" admiring the ancient usages and modern customs established amongst us; reverencing the religion and honoring the government of the state; surveying, with an eye of perfect indifference, the politics of Tories, Whigs, Radicals, Conservatives, Repealers, Chartists, and Destructives; and looking with a secret national pride at the amazing growth of poetry, painting, sculpture, and architecture, which surrounded me on all sides—what should I perceive (weather-beaten and shivering, as though it had been in the streets all night and literally frozen to the pavé) but a dog-a very mongrel and ungrateful dog, as you shall presently pronounce the brute to be. As I approached the house, the whelp commenced barking; a passer-by officiously told me he would not bite; but I said ! would prefer the dog's silence to his noise for it, notwithstanding. Out of pure and disinterested charity I went up to the door, with the intention of giving a single knock, on purpose that the family might be saved the trouble of inquiring who was there; but principally that the unnatural animal I speak of might gain admittance. By some misfortune or other, which invariably attends all my good intentions, instead of that notification which invites the attention of the least inquisitive ear, I gave the postman's mark. No sooner had I done so, than the door flew open; and, instead of the porter, a boorish-looking country 'squire supplied its place. I very politely made a bow, which he did not deem worthy the usual return. He was choked with rage, and I absolutely stunned with surprise. At length, perceiving that I was not a letter-carrier, he demanded whether I was prepared to recompense his excited, exasperated, and disappointed expectations for bringing him no news? I answered that my intention was to have given but one knock, and my object in knocking at all, was merely to obtain admission for the half-famished looking creature that stood before us, which I supposed to belong to the house outside which it presented such a melancholy spectacle. "Who dare say to the contrary?" said he. "Not I, I assure you," replied I, and was about to depart, when he added, "Had it been your intention to have the door opened for my dog, you would not come sneaking up to it, with a beggar's knock, but

approach it manfully, and as a gentleman should, and let the knocker denote your station in life. But, sir," continued he, "you came to make a cuckold of me, for which I will make a cripple of you." In vain did I expostulate; for he set the very dog at me which, but a few minutes before, excited so much compassion in my breast! and, for my Christian-like behaviour to the ungrateful, this is my reward.

Mirafair. A strange method, truly, of rewarding a man! Whine. My dear friend, a man may as soon break his eye-

tooth by cracking a blind nut as though it contained a kernel.

Mirafair. Had your scientific scissors been put in requisition on the 'squire's head, you might have taken your departure before he had time to open his mind to you.—And all this bustle has been occasioned by a neglect of etiquette. Let me see: at a single knock, the domestics' attention only is awakened; at the treble, and so upwards till it arrives at confusion, the family are curious to know who is at the door.

Whine. But why neglect the double quick knock?

Mirafair. Because it is attended to by every body: two, a charming couple, appear to be a middle state—a leveller of all distinctions, for it summonses the whole house—from the drawing-room to the kitchen and from the attic to the cellar—to the door.

Whine. Now, my dear sir, my business—that is, my important business—with you is, to have your advice as to how I had better proceed in this affair, or rather your assistance in my design, for revenge I am determined on having in some shape or other.

Mirafair, Think no more of it. It is one of those eccentric Quixotic adventures from which the most fortunate are not

exempt.

Whine. No, I don't pretend to combat windmills when there is nothing to be gained by the victory but chaff. I must be going. Every moment the chastisement of an insult is delayed adds a blow, or whatever else it may be, to the injury; and since he has given me the hint of what he fears, he shall not fear in vain. Well, as you will not, you may oblige me in a more innocent though not less foolish manner. Here is a poem which I am preparing for the press; let me know your opinion of it when next we meet. I intend to introduce myself to this clownish 'squire by desiring to place his name in the flattery page. But ere I go, I'll emphasis you a passage from the Qualms of Conscience:

With all a spider's victory o'er a fly, It surely is in him weak policy To hang up flies, as warning to their brothers,
To shun the spot which has proved death to others.
But stop—perhaps we think the spider naught;
May be 'tis for the trespass the fly's caught,
And the intruder's hung, as men hang crows.
In barley fields, to frighten off their foes.

Enter Proul.

Proul. Who is that gentleman, sir?

Mirafair. He is an uneasy friend of mine, who comes now and then to torment me; and this morning I could not get him away sooner.

Proul. You should use my master's method of getting rid

of an unwelcome visiter.

Mirafair. What way is that?

Proul. By getting your dog, Tory, to tell him to be off?
Mirafair. Nothing of that kind has happened to him?

Proul. Does he say there did not, sir?

Mirafair. He says there did; but he mentioned no name. Proul. Then, sir, my master's will fill up the vacancy.

Mirafair. Then it has happened singularly unfortunate; for he and I meeting at the same house will never do: our intentions being opposite will not make things better.

Proul. Why, surely, sir, he does not intend to go again?

Mirafair. He's gone now; at least he's gone to disguise

himself, and then straight for the house.

Proul. He'll find rather a crooked billet waiting for him.

Mirafair. [He has left me some of his poetical trash to scan. Suppose I ask Mr. Quorum for his opinion of its plot, and so serve them both by discovering the design.]—Proul, I have little further to explain; you know how matters stand?

Proul. Perfectly, sir. Nothing easier than the introduction and eventual success. My master is a member of parliament, you are another. All that is requisite to become acquainted with him is for you to sit at his side of the house, which you do at present. Whatever he proposes you can second, which you may conscientiously do, as it will be lost in the division; and he is so strenuous an advocate for the truck system, that he will repay you in kind, and second any thing you propose elsewhere. With Mrs. Q. you may have a more difficult game to play; for when she comes to deal, she will so shuffle the pack, that a court card must turn up trumps; and rather than allow a commoner to follow in her suit, a knave would be preferred. To subdue her prejudices, your ancestors at both sides must plead for you; and yet she patronises any thing that has novelty to recommend it. She has purchased

an air-stuffed carpet, for the sole purpose of boasting that she walks on air; and she is so precise in putting things to their proper use, that she would not wash the backs of her hands with palm soap. On the young lady's beauty and accomplishments I need not enlarge.

Mira. I have been thought too curious in my taste respecting beauty; but such intelligent loveliness; features so full of mind; so animated, yet so sweet, I never beheld. I have seen her; I am disengaged, and can I be proof against her charms?

Proul. If, however, sir, you think this introduction not romantic enough, there is a dernier resort, of which all avail themselves. Our family being strangers in town, wherever they go I attend them. To-morrow, the 'squire means to ride towards Richmond. Suppose you meet us there about twelve o'clock, at which time I shall pretend to have lost my way, though, perhaps, I shall find that I only lost my place, for my wandering propensities. At the critical moment you can come up, put us upon the right road, and so introduce yourself.

Mirafair. I think the first the most feasible; but can I depend upon your secrecy to the conclusion?

Proul. To the end, sir;

All servants are good lacqueys at the first;
But he is only good, who's good throughout. [Exeunt.

### ACT II.

### SCENE I .- MR. QUORUM'S HOUSE.

Mr. Quorum and Apt.

Mr. Quorum (reading a newspaper.) "Teeth, warranted to chew a beef-steak, pick a bone, and munch a crust."—So, Apt, we have arrived in London at last.

Apt. Yes, sir; and the first time with your humble servant.

Mr. Q. (reading.) "Self-adhesion, succedaneum, restoring perfect articulation and mastication; superior to the French terro-metallic, mineral marmoratum, or any other that ever can be offered." What jaw-breaking inducements to encourage the arts.—I went off in a sound nap just after we left Reading; and I told you, you dog, never to let me sleep longer than fifteen minutes.

Apt. It was no fault of mine, sir: I had no one to wake

me; if I had, I'd give your honour a rouse.

Mr. Q. (reading) "Nothing will stop teeth but gold." Nothing else will stop the advertiser's mouth, I believe.—How came you to tell me we were within twenty-five miles of town, when we were nigh forty from it?

Apt. An honest man on the road told me so, sir.

Mr. Q. I told you—not often enough, it would appear—to believe nothing on the road but the mile-stones.

Apl. And is every thing true that we read on stones, sir?

Mr. Q. No, booby; situation alters every thing: on the road you can believe nothing but the mile-stones: while, in a church-yard, you may believe any thing but the tomb-stones.

Apt. Would you not believe a highway-man, on the road,

sir, with a brace of pistols to your breast?

Mr. Q. Why—yes—perhaps, Apt—I might be disposed to believe him—to be in earnest; and yet I don't know why I

should, for I am confident he would not believe me.

Apt. We are, sir, a little inconsistent in our doings on the road, that is the truth on it. I always tell the sturdy beggars (saving "your" presence) as we are going up a hill, that we are poorer than they are, and have a worse chance of being better, for our pride won't let us beg; which, on entering a town, I change to, "Which is the head inn?"—But I guessed, sir, you would not be long in London before you war found out. Here (pulling letters out of his pocket) be a bundle of letters for your honour. They are so stuffed, that there must be money on the inside, though there be no subscription on the outside.

Mr. Q. Not directed, Apt?

Apt. Mayhap, sir, it's intended you should have all the news to yourself. For my own part, I don't know how they found out the right house: but it would not be easy for them to go astray; seeing they are directed to nobody. But the money on the inside is enough to make every one read his own name on the outside, in letters of gold. I'm thinking, sir, there may be gunpowder-plot inside, too. They once tried to blow up the parliament altogether, and might want to do so now, also, but only take one at a time, and begin with your honour.

Mr. Q. Were there any thing of that kind going forward, my friend, Lord Monteagle, would apprise me of it, as his namesake did my remote predecessor. Would that Sir Francis Freeling was at his post, he should free them all for me. My privilege extends to but ten a-day; and I receive as many in a week as would compensate the clerks or transcribers of the fitteenth century for the invention of the mystery of printing.

Apt. They might not all know they would come together.

Mr. Q. True, they all came from different people; and if
each person was to keep from sending, in consequence of my
inability to free all, I should have no way left of acquainting

inability to free all, I should have no way left of acquainting my constituents that I am at work for them.—If the Autocrat calls for my autograph, tell the barbarian my Dauatless secre-

'll write him one by proxy.

Apt. I knew, sir, you had an objection to lend your name; I did not think you'd refuse to give it.—How was it, sir, that we did not see the two white horses on the chalk hills between Bath and London, that you promised to show us?

Mr. Q. Because they were buried in the snow, you noodle. Apt. They have snow very deep in London, sir. As I was standing under a gateway till it was over, a while ago, I asked a cockney if 'twas not so, and he said they have it here as high

as the houses.

Mr. Q. Simpleton! could you not tell him you could beat him with snow-balls in the country; for we have it there as

high as the hills.

Apt. A squabble arose, sir, out of the snow between an Irishman, a Scotchman, and myself, an Englishman. "You have a block face, mon," said Sawney to me; so I made answer that he had a block head. Talking of blacks, sir, is a black man the same colour all through to the bone?

Mr. Q No; white, to be sure: did you never hear that

beauty is but skin deep?

Apt. No more it is. The Emerald Green said he'd see me in hell yet. I said he would if I went there. If I should die in this overgrown place, sir, I have a request to make.

Mr. Q. Are you, like the dead-living part of the world,

afraid of a resurrection of your body before its time?

Apt. That is not it, sir; but I don't like the notion of having my body washed when I am dead.

Mr. Q. Then you object to be thoroughly clean for once

in your life?

Apt. Hee, hee, master, for once in my life!

Mr. Q. Do you feel as much for every one that dies?

Apt. No, sir, I be no patriot or parliament man: I feel not for my fellow-subjects.—I did not tell you, sir, what I saw at Bartlemy Fair; I heard of your honour there too, but they did not know me. A fellow said that that speech which you made the other night was a wonderful speech—a downright strapper. I could plainly see you could never make such a speech at the quarter sessions, in the country, though there was twenty of them in the year; and, indeed, it was the finest speech I ever heard. I can tell you I was proud of having in my employ such a master.

Mr. Q. Why, what other speech did you ever hear before?
Apt. Your's, sir, was the first first speech I ever heard,
I must own; though I don't know that neither, for I heard

the *last* speech of a man that was hanged, who I am sure never made another speech in all his days.

Mr. Q. You dunce, what resemblance is there between my

Demosthenean-Ciceronean oration and a fellow's whimpering at the gallows?

Apt. I heard your's, sir, read, where I was taking a pot of ale.

Mr. Q. That, indeed. Well, and what did the company

say to my list of manifold grievances?

Apt. One said it was too long-winded; another said it was a bad wind that blew nobody good; another, again, said it was so long that it would entertain the long parliament. But I stoutly maintained that it was a beautiful speech for an old young beginner.

Mr. Q. What more did the guests say?

Apt. O, they all liked it hugely, though some did not like

it entirely; but that you must expect.

Mr. Q. No, there is no occasion to expect any such thing.

Apt. One said it was a promising speech; a second, that
it promised too little; and a third looked that if it did all it
promised, it would do more than he expected; another asked
what was the use of your promising any thing, when you could
perform nothing; and the last hearer informed the company
that you had no place yet.

Mr. Q. I can't make head or tail of your account of it .-

(loud knocking.) Apt, see who is at the door.

Apt. Are you at home, sir?

 $\hat{Mr}$ . Q. To any one that does not come with a cock and a bull story of a gasping dog.

Apt. Hee, hee, sir, a bull-dog story you mean.

Mr. Q. Begone. The gentleman will knock another peal; and I shall be then as much enraged at too much noise as though he did not make enough.

Apt. Another peal. Re-peal, master; you can't have too

much of that.

Mr. Q. Truly, re-peal has been rung so long and so loud in my ears, that it sounds very like re-bel.

Apt. Only that Lord Norbury has made his last joke, I

should think he was not done yet.

Mr. Q. The pun is worthy a Toler.—(louder knocking.) And, do you hear, as one thing should be finished out and out before another is begun, if that be the postman with letters; make him wait till he takes the answers.—(Exit Apt.)—Repeal! Yes, that word I'll henceforth adopt as my own. It shall apply to nothing else but to the hobby-horse of my old age. And as Cæsar's intended expedition against the Parthians was to have been the grand work of his future life, so shall REPEAL be mine!—I have grown entirely tired of this town before I have seen the half of it; how much more than perfect my dislike of it must be by the time that I have

seen the whole. While walking the streets, I am obliged to look behind me, every now and then, to see whether I am rode over or not; and I have not been in parliament long enough to deserve so violent a death. In the city, my eyes are closed up with smoke, and at the court-end they are dazzled with tinsel and frippery; while open at the one place, I see faces wanting soap, while, at the other, I perceive faces that wear a superfluity of wash; and am at a loss to know which is most disagreeable. In all places, my ears are invaded by cries, which I should not understand though I were to serve my apprenticeship to the trade, or rather calling. find it equally necessary to keep my hands in my pockets whether they contain money or not: should they be full, they run the risk of being pillaged; and, should they be empty, they stand the chance of having a rogue's purse conveyed into them, to enable the "suicide" robber to swear to his property found on the person. I meet none but strange faces here; none that salute, hurrah, or in any way notice me gratis. I do not even meet a beggar, to say "your honor" or "your worship," who, if good for nothing else, reminds a man of his dignity and consequence. The only people from whom I receive any homage are street painters, vulgarly called crossing sweepers, and that I buy. I have scraped an acquaintance with one of this class, in Piccadilly, who promises, in time, to make a very tolerable artiste in the landscape branch of his profession, and no wonder: he has an extensive field for his labours a few yards off, in which are sheep and cows as large as life, and trees in abundance; a very naturallydrawn sky over his head; a good ground under his feet (a little of the darkest certainly); and a very substantial pencil always at his fingers' ends. (Enter Apt.)

Apt. A gentleman, sir, has come to wish you joy on your

arrival in London.

Mr. Q. I wish he had brought some with him.

Apt (presenting card.) Here is his passport.

Mr. Q. (reading the card.) "Mr. Whine." Whine—I know him not. His name, however, is vastly different from his note of hand at the knocker. Desire him to walk up. (exit Apt.) This comes of my eloquent speech last night.

(Enter Mr. Whine.)

Whine. Observing, sir, in this morning's list of fashionable arrivals, that the genuine patriot, Roderic Quorum, Esquire, M. P., and so forth, had honored the metropolis of England—I might, indeed, say of the planet Earth, with his presence, I was determined in losing not a moment's time in having the

distinguished honor conferred upon me of being the first to dedicate my literary effusions to so noble a patron of men of genius as I am about to give you a glorious opportunity of fully proving yourself to be. Besides, sir, I possess the laudable ambition of being the humble instrument of conveying your name, beyond this brief existence, down the stream of Fame, to the very latest—the last age of posterity.

Mr. Q. I expected such a visiter on my coming to town, sir; and must admit that I am prepossessed in your favour—notwithstanding your name—by the open, opening, gentlemanly manner in which you announced yourself at the hall-

door.

Whine. Sir, I affect no peculiar manners differing from

those of other gentlemen.

Mr. Q. No affectation in life, sir; but your stately gait and portly movement combine to form a perfect contrast to a poor

scheming rogue who waited upon me yesterday.

Whine. What, sir, then am not I the first in discovering so much patriotism? There is much honor lost, sir, if I am not the first—the very FIRST. [I think I have been the first though; I feel I have.]

Mr. Q. You are the first that will boast of finding any

merit in this house.

Whine. Do you know the fellow to whom you allude, sir? Mr. Q. Not from Adam. Indeed, if you asserted that you were he, I could only contradict you by the extraordinary contrast which exists between you: the manners of a gentleman, which you possess, and the want of them, which he possesses, together with the knowledge, which I possess, that he is laid by the heels for the next six months at least. But, sir, to leave such a pitiful knave, and attend to you. I am willing to patronize your performance, provided the subject is agreeable to my taste. But, bear in mind, that I go no farther than the dedication. I shall never agree to travel as an inside passenger, in company with a stageful of rather doubtful characters, who, when they make their egress from thence, are to be found, perhaps, no where else on the habitable globe. In a word, I book myself as an outside passenger down your stream of Fame.

Whine. By all means, sir.

Mr. Q. Still, although I condescend to countenance the offspring of your muse, I will not promise to praise it should I find it to be a patch-work of wretched whines and childish pulings.

Whine. Certainly not, sir.

Mr. Q. For a poet expects his trash to be landed to the skies, by calling his dramatis personæ a host of angels; and enjoys genuine delight while he himself is being traced out in the most brave and virtuous character delineated in the piece.

Whine. That, sir, is only the case with an amateur author, who, finding no one willing to praise him, undertakes to find out his own perfections; and is afraid to portray a vicious character, lest the critics should be inclined to accuse him of originality, or drawing too largely on himself, without having some splendid sinner of more importance as an endorser. Consequently, his performance is one continual calm; and the scene shifters (like the actors behind the curtain in real life) are the only performers in it that make any bustle at all.

Mr. Q. Ay, but an author is like a fond mother, who looks for it, as a matter of course, that her visiter should take her squalling brat in his arms, and dandle it up to the ceiling; and is never better pleased than when he praises her constancy and love for its dear papa, by tracing out the striking resemblance which it bears to him, and likening its sweet temper and dimpled rosy cheeks to her own even disposition, modest carriage, and personal charms. Pray, sir, are you an author of long standing?

Whine. Very, sir, but not known by name, except by the assumed cognomen "Anon." I have either written, edited, related, translated, restored, re-storied, retouched, revived, reviewed, and adapted to the taste of the times, half the fashionable novels of the day. My works have been very extensively circulated throughout the known world, in every variety of form, from the diamond duodecimo up to the great

elephant folio.

Mr. Q. With what species of composition of your's does the press groan at present?

Whine. A comedy, sir.

Mr. Q. A comedy, in our language, is the Fop's History of England for the time being, and the Beau Nash of the day the reigning monarch. Did you ever try your hand at tra-

gedy?

Whine. I produced a tragedy, last season, at one of the theatres-royal, which I dedicated to the youthful Dowager Duchess of Aherina—a lady, sir, whose smiles operate on a work of genius in the same manner as the beams of the sun do on a field of green wheat: without both, neither would be good for any thing.

Mr. Q. Did the young dowager laugh at your tragedy?

Whine. She wept at intervals. When I woo Madame

Melpomene, I ogle Madame Thalia at the same time. I adhere to the old school, commingling tragic with comic scenes; and I observed that her grace pursued her grief so swiftly with her joy, that her smiles, playing on her tears, produced to my poetical fancy a kind of demi-Iris, such as a rainbow which the action of the sun on a shower brings forth. ladyship is proud to boast that I have afforded her more genuine delight than the tuneful Nine in full chorus, or even Apollo himself. Accompanied by Monsieur Le Sage, she was present when my drama was first presented to an anxiously admiring audience, and wept to her heart's entire content before the conclusion of the first scene; called to her upper female attendant for a fresh cambric handkerchief at the second act; did nothing but sob-except it might be, every now and then, to heave forth a deep sigh, by way of mental bass-relief-at the third; grew alarmingly (charmingly, I mean) ill at the fourth; and, ere we arrived at the catastrophe, the dress-circle were in momentary apprehension lest her ladyship should have given up her lovely ghost before the hero of mine own creation had taken his departure for the world to come and the green-room! Her ladyship was never known to be so moved before, and never will be so distressed again, she assures me-no; not even in case of a national bankruptcy.-My tragedy of Sir Walter Raleigh is nearly complete; and, if there be any meaning in anagrams, the royal pedant must have had no faith in them, else the noble cavalier's name\* had been his invincible guard.

Mr. Q. Did you ever try your hand at an epic poem?

Whine. Why, really, sir, I question whether the events of time are sufficient to furnish materiel for another epic. Every thing that has transpired the world has been told over and over again; and, I believe, all that is to happen has been

anticipated and exhausted by imagination.

Mr. Q. O, sir, you are certainly wrong: for there is plenty of work cut out for a poet, could we but light on the aspirant. Has not the last book of the Faery Queen been lost on the Irish Sea. There is a majestic subject for you to employ your genius upon. The Eneiad of Virgil is left imperfect: put the finishing stroke to that in the Latin, translate it into English, and then add it to Dryden's version of that poet. You may, if you please, order it to be burned: it may want some such clap-trap to induce posterity to preserve it. Then there is Hudibras, a mere fragment to what it may be made. Then,

SIR WALTER RALEIGH: SIR, WE ARE ALL RIGHT.——In the reign of James I., Sir Walter Raleigh, Lords Cobham and Gray, and Sir Edward Parham, &c. were tried for high treason.

in our own time, there is Don Juan. Why not complete that with half a score cantos on the horrors of seduction? Here are a few lines to begin with; the metre being different will give it an air of novelty:

He tried all arts my plighted vows to wean; He even sainted Mary Magdalene; And while he lauded Lady Teazle's wit, He told me not-repentance followed it. But knowing the poet's precepts were designed To teach as well as to amuse mankind, To his "honourable logic" a deaf ear I lent; And though he came a wolf, a Lamb he went.

Plenty of work-plenty of work for a poet. Have you seen

Mr. Couplet's new comic poem?

Whine. His love story presents, sir, about as connected a

tale as an auctioneer's catalogue.

Mr. Q. And giving as much information as the conditions of sale, which says, the highest bidder to be the purchaser.

Whine. Or, should any dispute arise, the lot to be put up for

competition again.

Mr. Q. And as much versatility of matter as a page of dittos.

Whine. And causes as many nods as a whole three days'

sale.

Mr. Q. And has as melancholy a conclusion to the great bulk of its readers as the knock-down blow of the auctioneer's hammer is to all the bidders save one-and that one the author, who is alone pleased with the purchase. - But, sir, to the point. I become the patron of your new work: and you may not regret it; for though I am only of the lower house at present, the day may come when I shall make a figure in the upper house of parliament, and grace a coronet.

Whine. The head of your "ancient" house, sir, deserves a

more dignified ornament than a coronet.

Mr. Q. That is the most distinguished mark of honor worn

by a British subject.

Whine. There is, sir, a more distinguishing badge, which I shall use my utmost abilities to obtain for you-[one which the King is not necessarily obliged to confer, and which the poorest devil in the land will never desire to deprive you of, or even envy you the possession.

Mr. Q. I hope you make no allusion to the Crown; for I must tell you candidly I am too much troubled already with the business of a county, to possess the shadow of a desire ever

to take the affairs of a kingdom into my hands.

Whine. Truly, sir, though the honours I seek for you ber's on the crown, there is no high treason in my intentions toward my Sovereign. When once you assume this title, no one accuse you of being a pretender to it, though they may be name that served you as a stepping-stone in obtaining it.

Mr. Q. That settled, what say the public to my main

Mall

M

speech?

Whine. They say, sir, that you have a chaste delivery, and possess a bashfulness highly becoming on a first appearance in public. I have had the pleasure of perusing your piece of elocution in the public prints; but would be glad to have the heads of it from the fountain-head, your own lips.

Mr. Q. One of my propositions was that when a new to was levied, those places should be exempt from it whose

members were in the minority.

Whine. Admirable! But how would that be adjusted when one of the members of a town was for, and the other against, it being made law?

Mr. Q. Then their respective electors must profit and less according to the conduct of their representatives in parlis-

ment. 'Tis every one for himself these times.

Whine. Better still. And, instead of bribing them, by giving them his money, the candidate may do so by allowing them to keep their own. They may then take the bribery oath with safety, as who will think of asking a man whether he bribes and corrupts himself?

Mr. Q. Exactly so. How one neighbour will laugh at the

other when that receives the royal assent.

Whine. He will chuckle, sir, at the conceit; and then put up in earnest, "No connexion with next shop."

Mr. Q. I intend to bring in a bill, which will compel every

elector, at a contest, to vote one way or another.

Whine. Suppose they will not?

Mr. Q. Then I will have all the unpolled votes joined together, and divided fairly among all the candidates! for it is a thousand pities that ten hundred good votes should be lost, as was the case, at the last election, in the county adjoining mine.

Whine. Two thousand, sir; as the ten hundred electors you speak of were not obliged to give plumpers.—What, sir, are your sentiments on universal suffrage and vote by bailot?

Mr. Q. We must have the first; as I think it but very little removed from injustice to hang a man without his own 'particular' consent. The inhabitants at large of every county, city, and borough should vote, none whatever excepted.

Whine. The inhabitants at large, sir! Would all prisoners then go unrepresented, or would hide-and-seek debtors only

be allowed a voice?

Mr. Q. All should be freemen on such a joyful occasion: prisoners confined as well as prisoners at large. As for the ballot (though, through policy, I subscribe to it) it is a species of double-dealing, black-balling, backsliding, round-robin method of making a representative.

Whine. I understand the member for Scot and Lot was of

your opinion, sir.

Mr. Q. We were at daggers-drawn, notwithstanding; but why should that spoil sport? A cuckold and a cuckold-maker are of the same opinion: both agree in admiring the same fine lady; but their similarity of ideas are not sufficient to keep them from quarrelling, for all that.—I had a difference, also, with a foreigner: he extolled the prowess of Frenchmen till all was blue, and I praised the valour of Englishmen till I blushed red in the face. In this, likewise, you perceive, we were of one opinion, each preferring his own countrymen.

Whine. I fancy, sir, that to form a just estimate of the merits of the natives of the various climes of the globe, we must have the decision of a being who belongs to no country

at all.

Mr. Q. Nay, sir, not so neither: for, by that rule, if you did not know the way to Heaven, you would inquire of a modern Diagorus which is the best religion.

Whine. May I ask you, sir, how you would estimate the

value of men?

Mr. Q. I'll tell you without, sir. I would have every one praise his own countrymen and countrywomen, and express their admiration of them, too, by living amongst them. I gave St. Denis (with his head under his arm, like a chapeau bras, through excess of politeness) to understand as much, by telling him it did not very satisfactorily prove his admiration of his countrymen by his coming so far a-field from home to assert and maintain it. This is my private sentiment, my public one is, to call the men of every country through which I pass "the noble-minded and the brave," and the women, "the lovely and the good!"—My next proposition in parliament will be to make crim. con. a capital crime. But the objection which I have in bringing it forward is, that it is not entirely new: it has been proposed unsuccessfully before.

Whins. Then, sir, should you succeed, you will have the satisfaction of accomplishing what the great Lord Mansfield

failed in.

Mr. Q. But should I fail?

Whine. You'll have the pleasure of failing in company with his lordship—that's all. Pray, sir, would you punish

the gallant so severely?

Mr. Q. Yes, indeed would I, sir; and as the husband was to bear his part of the shame, he should have the refusing of hanging the delinquent. Law-makers seldom think of framing an act till occasion occurs to put it in force.

Whine. They do not meet new crime half way.

Mr. Q. No, they wait till it is full grown. But it argues very little for the fertility of their imagination, to be outdone in invention by a common footpad or petty-larceny pickpocket. It was permitting shop-lifters to go their lengths, that let them swell themselves at last into house-breakers; and had adultery been summarily punished at first, it had never gone beyond fornication.—But, sir, larger grievances agitate my breast. The people of my part of the empire have repeatedly, indeed continuously, for the last six hundred years, demanded, implored, nay, beseeched, to have themselves placed on an equal footing with the more fortunate parts; so that their precious dispositions might expand themselves agreeably to their fine and happy natures. Their call was never attended to—the more's the pity. Except with, every now and then, a short and evanescent exception, as they ruled us then they rule us now: there is nothing new under the sun. We must establish a society to advance projects (as yet in embryo), embracing all classes who choose to agree to the very reasonable regulations which I shall propose; but particularly to pay the fines for the non-observance thereof. There we shall have discussion-instant, earnest, and unceasing discussion; and if I don't have my part of it, it won't be my fault. We must also start a rent; it is a comfortable thing! and leave me alone for the lion's share of that also. I can do nothing without it; and with it, I can-but no matter. Let every man, woman, and child who pays a penny, be a member of the association, with power to add to their number, and to speak and vote-the women and children (of two days and four hours' old) may do both by proxy: their "respected" husbands and parents will do as well as themselves; and let every man who pays sixpence be an associate, and be entitled to all sorts of protection from every body!

Whine. Reasonable, indeed; nothing more so.

Mr. Q. [I must take care of my p's and q's with this Jew.] I hope you consider, sir, there is nothing selfish in this business; that I have no pe-cu-niary object in view?

Whine. That, sir, is a deducible fact.

Mr. Q. I think so. But, sir, I am not content with the report of my speech in very many of the papers. Paragraphs and paragraphs, I have been reading this morning, which I should never have thought of unless somebody else thought of them for me; and to what I have said they give quite a shocking meaning. The truth is, my dear sir, the press indulges in licentiousness to an alarming degree.

Whine. Pitt, sir, would not have tolerated such lengths.

Mr. Q. Not he; he'd put a spoke in the wheel of that mis-

chievous machine.

Whine. Undoubtedly he would, sir. He'd "stop the press:" not, indeed, in the manner in which it is stopped in these degenerate days, to circulate the lie of some broken-down dabbler in the stocks. No, no; he'd stop it by putting the babbler of a printer in the parish stocks, as a salutary punishment for his communicativeness; and employ the stocks as a mere breakerin to the scaffold.

Mr. Q. As a public man, I am unquestionably public property. I am not fastidious—not in the least. I can easily bear a reasonable share of direct abuse and of indirect and unjust imputation. Indeed, the more unjust it is, the more easy do I bear it. This is a secret worth the notice of those who may delight to assail me. In a paper of last week, the libeller says, "Every one knows that Mr. Quorum is not blessed or plagued with that especial regard to consistency in politics which would induce him to abide by professions formerly made, when it becomes his present cue to renounce or forget them." Now, I assert that every one does not know any such thing! The London papers have no interest in reporting matters purely provincial. The reporters either do not report truly, or cut down my speeches to mere nonsense. I am as well treated when I speak on general business as any one of my calibre in the house; but it is quite ludicrous to see how I am used when my topics are local. The most persnasive speech made this session-and, I believe, the very best delivered in parliament since Warren Hastings' trialwas positively Burked! Thus, was An Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful-

Whine. " Born to blush UNSEEN."

Mr. Q. A speech of four hours' duration was despached in the size of the title of the bill we were debating on. So that an effort such as this really was, and which, indeed, made a vast impression within doors, made none at all without. I am not proud; but there is a sort of courteous usage established which we, men of the people, naturally fall into and expect. But, sir, great as my talents confessedly are, the country will go to ruin all at once, unless there is an implicit faith reposed in me by my brother members—an unwearied ear lent to me—and, in short, a full swing given me in all I think proper to project.

Whine. [Modesty and moderation.]

Mr. Q. We must have the name of every proprietor of every newspaper registered. I want to know the name of every man that earns his bread by abusing me; and the more I can wreak my vengeance on, the better; and should I fail in punishing, I shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing where we went to school together, or how came such an intimate acquaintance.

Whine. I doubt your success in that.

Mr. Q. I shall be disappointed if I do succeed. To a real thorough-bred, thorough-paced agitator, who looks to get a living out of his trade, there is no misfortune so great as the concession of his demands. If there were no food for discontent, there would be nothing for him to devour. His business, therefore, is, not to demand what may be granted, but what must be refused. By that policy, he obtains the credit of uncompromising zeal for his country, and keeps the machinery always going for himself.—Then, again, they do more fairly by a "member" at public meetings than they do in his own House of Commons. When I speak at the former, they say "Mr. Quorum, M. P.," but when I harangue the Commons, they pay no such mark of respect, plain "Mr. Quorum" must down.

Whine. When a member of the Collective Wisdom attends a meeting, his name should be put down with all the honors.

Mr. Q. No; my penetrating eye has discovered the deep design. It is tacitly saying, "This man is a member of parliament at a parish squabble, or at a Lord of Finsbury's dinner, but not one where he ought to be. One meeting, in particular, I remember, at which there was a marked insult levelled at me by this "press-gang." It was rendered famous by its being the only one at which I was ever a silent auditor. I happened just then to be under a course of forensic abstinence, and a most humiliating fast it proved to be.—In the House of Commons itself, I have to complain of injustice towards me.

Whine. I observe, sir, that, divide the house as often as you may, you hardly have any one but your seconder and yourself on your side.

Mr. Q. Whenever I demand a division, the Speaker rises and orders all my friends out of the gallery; among whom are, doubtless, many members who shun publicity. It is contrived in this way. When I try the experiment, up starts an hon. member, who says, "Mr. Speaker, I perceive there are strangers present." That functionary then gives the notice to quit; and slap dash away they all send, as though they were making their escape from the cholera. But they are fools for their haste, sir : for, let them run as fast as they may, the new tax, which they fly from, will be sure to overtake them\*. Some of my honourable colleagues make plagny lengthy speeches. My Lord Neverstop made an uncommon long one last night. I went to sleep in the middle of it and woke before it was half done! Pray, sir, did he carry all that he had to say in his head?

Whine. All extempore, I dare say, sir. He probably entered the walls of St. Stephen's Chapel of Ease without turning over, in his head, a sentence of what he afterwards deli-

vered, and merely took what came next to hand.

Mr. Q. I thought something like that: for, while he was on his legs, he made much more use of his hands than he did of his head. At the beginning he appeared to have lost the thread of his discourse, and was ever after feeling for it. He, also, seemed to contradict at the conclusion of his speech what he advanced at its commencement.

Whine. Whenever I hang on his lordship's lamentable periods, he reminds me of a Lancashire man with a dying wife. You ask him how his lady is? and he answers, "Well.

she is very ill!"

Mr. Q. I received a petition, for presentation this afternoon; and which I certainly would present, were it not that I hold petitioning, in any light, with abhorrence. I am a modern Abhorrer. It is from a very inquisitive, industrious, and voluntarily loyal class of persons—the Society of Com-

mon Informers of the Metropolis.

Whine. A very loyal and self-privileged body, undoubtedly, sir; as they never practise their profession without being called to the bar, and they may commence business in the city, though not free of any one of the companies; ay, and pursue their trade (lawfully) at the very moment that every one else must discontinue his.

Mr. Q. Their request is an extremely reasonable one. They humbly pray, and (accordinging to their petition) will

When the gallery is cleared for a division, strangers make what haste they can out; as the first who go out at one door are the first who gain admission at the other.

ever pray (which, I believe, may be true enough, as they will have to petition as long as they live) that, now that the hon. house has provided a trade for them, that it will be pleased to protect them in the exercise of same, which can only be accomplished by silencing the diurnal press. They show that their police reports put people they are endeavouring to improve on their guard, and ruin at once their best-their fondest hopes! I heartily regret "registering a vow" against petitioning, were it but for this one: as informers must be protected. They are to a member of parliament what an executioner is to a sheriff: if they do not put an act in force, the framers of it must, else their honourable labours will remain a dead letter. I was handed another petition-if petition it can be called. The applicant says, I am too proud to address you in a mood of supplicancy, and too honest not to do so in the language of indignation.

Whine. Petitioning, and through a representative, too, is

strange.

Mr. Q. Quite unworthy the dignity of a knight of the shire at any rate. I think a member, with a petition in his pocket, is like a servant, with a letter in his. He that sends it is afraid to confide verbally in the bearer, or fearful of his making some blunder in the delivering of its contents.

Whine. When I see an hon, and learned member with a petition in his hand, he reminds me of an actor reading his

part.

Mr. Q. But, sir, this is desultory. What does the town say to my projects, or is there any wind of the election?

Whine. Pardon me, sir; it is not the office of a friend to

report bad news.

Mr. Q. Nay, an' it comes to that, it is not the duty of a friend to conceal any bad news that may be abroad.

Whine. Then, sir, it is hinted that-

Mr. Q. Hinted? If the rascals will not speak roundly, they may say what they will for me. "WE WILL" understand none of their short-hand accusations.

Whine. Those who do speak out say, that your temporary return will be brought in a sort of "temporary insanity."

Mr. Q. "Found drowned" would be quite as consoling.

Any other reports for me to confute?

Whine. That, on the first issuing of a bulletin of the last illness of the late King, you set about improving the suburbs of your town, which you never expended a shilling on before.

Mr. Q. Better late than never-but go on.

Whine. That these, and some minor items put together,

form ample materials for a petition, which petition has been lodged in the Hanaper Office, and is to be presented, to the honourable house before the Easter Recess, and ballotted for

immediately on its resumption of business.

Mr. Q. Now, is not this enough to make me detest and abhor petitioning and ballotting as long as I live? An ignorant, mercenary, and servile crew, unanimous in evil, diligent in mischief, variable in principle, constant to flattery, talkers for liberty, but slaves to power.

Whine. But, sir, consider the honor of being a patriot.

Mr. Q. A patriot! Patriotism, that once meant the noblest exertion of disinterested virtue, by which every attention to private advantage was sacrificed to the public good, signifies now no more than an opposition to the measures of government, whether right or wrong, till the governors are so embarrassed as to be obliged to admit the patriots to a share of their power, when they directly throw off the mask for some other brawlers to take up, and do themselves the very things which they before disclaimed against with such noise and vehemence. The word "patriot" is lost in "profit." Were Pope to write the "Cato" of prologues to-day, he would substitute hangmen for patriots.

Whine. Really, it would read as well:

Such tears as hangmen shed for dying laws.

Mr. Q. Read as well? Yes, and be replete with meaning. Whine. These are but the current reports in town, sir; from the country, the news is, that your constituents are burning you in effigy in consequence of your last vote.

Mr. Q. I would they were burned in their own electioneering tar-barrels. Burn me in effigy, did you say? Why, if they will only burn me in jest, and that I cannot burn them

in earnest, I will be even with them, for,

I don't care a FIG for my F, I, G; Nor for any such trash as a *mock* M, P.

Whine. Some there are malicious enough to report that you have accepted office already; and, before you began carving for them, commenced helping yourself. The first man I met this morning told me you were just appointed Secretary of State; while the next person I came in contact with said, you were sent to the Woods and Forests, as the place in which you would find yourself more at home. Believing the latter to be true, I told it to another; who so far confirmed the news by telling me that, judging by the manner in which you were yoing on, he expected, every day, to read your name in the Gazette.

Mr. Q. I certainly am exerting myself to assist her Majesty in governing this obstinate people; but did not think she should so soon discover my abilities; but the Queen is a discerning woman, and can judge from a little what a whole may be, as naturalists tell the size of the mammoth by examining an articulation of its toe. I don't believe the good news to be true, however; it anticipates my views a little.

Whine. Nor I either, now, sir. But this, instead of being surprised at, you should expect. Were you a wrangling, agitating lawyer (which you are not), there are those in the world who would assert that your mouth was for ever closed up, by the great seal of Great Britain being placed upon it; and were you an obstreperous peer of the realm, they would transport you to that western colony of ours, Ireland, as its lieutenant. Nor is there much harm in these reports; it is possible they may jog the memory of the Queen.

Mr. Q. But is there not also a probability of her Majesty being driven from such good intentions, by being anticipated

by these mere talkers?

Whine. I fancy not, sir. It was lately reported that the Corporation of London were about to express their approbation of the conduct of an ex-Lord Mayor, by presenting him with a gold cup. This was pure rumour. It got, as soon as it was intended, to the ears of the Premier, who, to be the first to discover this mare's nest, had him dubbed knight; the citizens then, to follow the court-card, set about their gold cup, which neither his merit nor his friends' reports could ever induce them to spend a thought upon before.

Mr. Q. I perceive, by the papers, that the Prime Minister received the freedom of the city (I suppose in return.) Pray, sir, what use will that be to him? A peer of parliament

cannot vote at elections.

Whine. Merely the honor, sir. His lordship may, indeed, in virtue of it, set up a tin-plate worker's, or bobbin-maker's, shop beyond Temple Bar, if he please; but for any other benefit, I believe it is confined in the gold box which accompanied it.

Mr. Q. I expect, at least, a ribbon and star of some one of

the orders.

Whine. You are nothing without a star. [We may, in one respect, compare the stars of state to the stars of heaven, for they shed their lustre alike upon the dishonest as well as upon the honest man; but in all else they are "far as the poles asunder;" for the stars of the firmament, by their light, sometimes point out the villain's deeds, while the stars of

honour often tend to shield, and cover even from suspicion, (what they cover in reality) the foul, corrupt, and deceitful

heart.

Mr. Q. I fear I shall not be able to wait for all the honours I may be eligible to. I have been at an immense expense in town already, besides some extravagances which I have to answer for in the country. I had but just re-built the old family mansion with Kyanized timber (perfectly peppered against the dry-rot,) and had it crowned with an umbrella roof, when I was suddenly called away to the service of my country. I addressed my wife with as much simplicity and originality as the Roman husbandman did his, when he left his paternal acres untilled for that year of governing. "I fear, my Attilia," said I; but no, 'twas Cincinnatus said that.

Whine. The umbrella roof must have cost you a pretty

penny, sir.

Mr. Q. A bag of Queen Ann's farthings would clear no more than a shilling in the pound. Nay, sir, had the rafters been whalebone and the slates oiled silk, the exorbitant rogue who built it could not have demanded more than he compelled me to pay.—But remain where you are to dinner, and read me a chapter or two of your tragedy or comedy.

(Enter Proul.)

Proul. Mr. Mirafair, sir, who desires to know if you are at home.

Mr. Q. Show him up.

Whine. [Mirafair! What brings him here? Then I must be off.]—I have an appointment at this hour, sir, which I did not recollect till this moment, so must take my leave.

Mr. Q. Farewell, then, sir, for the present. (Exeunt.

## ACT III.

SCENE, THE SAME .- MRS. QUORUM, MR. HOMETHRUST.

Mr. Homethrust. Madam, allow me to place one circumstance in a fairer light, which, I believe, I can do without

throwing the deeds of others into the shade.

Mrs. Quorum. True, you would say [if I don't say it for you] that it is but doing an act of justice to hinder the law from taking its course. He has ran himself over head and ears in debt, I doubt not—let him rub off the chalks as others do. I believe they call it whitewashing; but no matter what they call it, I call it washing the blackamoor white, in his case. Or, may be the Chalking Act bears some relation to it, or may be it does not. He would never confine himself within the common rules that the prudent world deem it ex-

pedient to subject themselves to—for their own well-being and happiness, by the by; let us now see what a confinement within the rules of her Majesty's Queen's Bench Prison can do. I say, let us see what virtue there is in the Queen's Bench.

Homethrust. Very little, I am afraid.

Mrs. Q. The rules of the Bench are open to him, I repeat; and I add, they will remain open to him, at least till he gets in ! and they say there are no rules without exceptions; why, then, should he be an exception to the rules? If he is tired of being hunted by his creditors, let him hie thither; they are the modern sanctuaries—they can pursue him no farther. But you seem to think, Cousin Homethrust, a prison is beneath him. Why, Theodore, king of Corsica, was not above one when he was confined within its walls. To be sure, honest Theodore had a kingdom to register for the use of his creditors, in exchange for his liberty; while our friend has not so much land to resign as was assigned to the poor monarch on his enlargement! Apropos, it would be worth while to know whether his London purveyors held the reigns of government long enough for Bonaparte to lay his eagle's claw upon them.—But, may be our friend's nice compunctuous visitings of conscience will not allow him to be benefited by the Insolvent Debtors' Act. I don't know how or when it was passed into a law. Perhaps it was read a first time when there was an extremely thin house in the Commons-merely the bare walls. I mean, the forty indispensable members might be formed out of the forty-four hon, gentlemen from, or rather for, Cornwall. Then, at the second reading of the bill, there might be, for aught I know to the contrary, forty "indispensables" from all parts of the empire, the majority of whom were, perhaps, ousted from their seats afterwards, for bribery and corruption used in obtaining them, by ill-natured, selfish committees, who took far too extensive views of things in general, ever to look at home! and the remaining portion of the house might be desirous of obliging their constituents, so that they might find at home at the canvass those dear friends whose suffrages would be so cheering at the hustings, and also to keep from home those other fellow-freemen of theirs. whom their threats could not keep from, nor their purses prevail upon to come to, the poll. At the third reading of this precious bill, the senators themselves might have had an eve to a general election; and, as they could no longer stop their creditors' mouths, by ramming their "privilege of parliament" down their throats, they, perhaps, tried the other only means in their power to make the lowering look of a dun appear as

cheerful and complaisant as when he was soliciting the office of dunship. It was too insipid an affair ever to get to the Peers on its own merits; and their privilege from arrest at most times, made it too vague to collect a full assembly of these "lords" of the "creation." And, if this method of paying his debts without money do not suit his taste, let him try his influence at Court.

Homethrust. Ah, madam, the laws of the land allow the Queen no prerogative with respect to the unfortunate debtor.

Mrs. Q. There can be but one reason why they do not— Debt, villainous debt, being considered the crime in all the calendar of the greatest magnitude!

Homethrust. Rather, madam, does not the withholding that prerogative from the sovereign call loudly upon the subject to exercise his prerogative, and set his imprisoned brother free?

Mrs. Q. O, doubtless it "calls loudly;" but, it would appear, not loud enough, for all that: as those who do not hear the noise will never employ a speaking-trumpet (for the informant) to assist them to the information which he endeavours to give; and the loudest callers, like the loudest talkers. prove, by the very act, that they are the least attended to.

Homethrust. Come, come, madam, although, perhaps, he has a trifle more than an average share of errors, it must be admitted, on all hands, that he possesses many excellent qua-

lities of his own, without a single vindictive trait.

Mrs. Q. That he has some good qualities, I shall not now deny; but how you can torture language so as to call them "his own," I am at a loss to learn. If, by giving away that which, by right, belongs to another, is his, then, indeed, he has some good qualities—of his own!

Homethrust. What, madam, not the many that he has raised

from the very threshold of inevitable destruction?

Mrs. Q. Well, I subscribe to all the wonders—all the miracles of our Man of Ross. I admit he has raised plains at a railway speed; I merely modestly observe, that it were to be wished he adopted other methods of doing so than by levelling (with the rapidity of a gunpowder explosion) the surrounding mountains—the ornament, the pride of the land.

Homethrust. And what other good are mountains for but to fill up the hollows? Hills are of themselves but barren mounds; and, figuratively speaking, instead of affording shelter from the elements to the humble valleys (which they were made to shade) too often fail down and bury them in ruins. Besides, madam, after he had raised the plains and levelled the mountains (which you mention) for his poorer friends, he did not (as some had set him the example) gad about to his affluent acquaintance, and make mountains of molehills. And, madam, after alluding to his generosity, I may, with propriety, remark, that I have it from authority which I choose to believe, that he pays his debts as soon as they are contracted.

Mrs. Q. But not till then.

Homethrust. The worst meaning that can be given to prompt payment is, that he who practises it saves the per centage.

Mrs. Q. O, no, it is not the immediate payment that is in fault at all. No; it all lies in the contraction. Some people pay their debts when they contract them; others pay theirs when they are contracted by their creditors. What says Tod upon Johnson on the word "contracted?" To quote from memory, it runs somewhat thus: "abridged," "shrivelled up," "shrunk," "to epitomise," or "to draw into a less substance." You have not heard a word, I suppose, of his paying a shilling in the pound, the other day, by way of composition?

Homethrust. Not a syllable, madam; and, now that I do

hear it, I decline believing it.

Mrs. Q. Well, well, we can't be expected to believe all that we hear. I dare say he did not pay half the sum you accuse him of paying. With you, I think he paid only a great.

Homethrust. A groat, madam? Madam, I earnestly desire-Mrs. Q. Nay, nay, Cousin Homethrust, it must be allowed that you have a method quite peculiar to yourself of discharging the debts of gratitude which, you are pleased to say, you owe our house. You come here now, for instance, this very fine morning, and—by way of paying off one of them lay before me the wretched relation of a still more wretched You inform me, I say, that that withered branch of our family is in a desolate condition in this very neighbourhood-removed hither, assuredly, for the express purpose of annoying us, with more ease to himself and more incon-Now, to my understanding—simple as, venience to us. doubtless, it is considered by some of my very good friends to be—if your information is the cause of depriving us of so much money, do you mind-whatever we may happen to give—it adds so much more to, rather than in any way diminishes, your former debts of friendship.

Homethrust. Madam-

Mrs. Q. Besides, it is but paying a very poor compliment to our discernment, let me tell you, for you to presume to instruct us where to bestow our charity! Indeed, the finding

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out the way to use the things of this life, being the first blow, is half the battle, as Dr. Ipecacuanha remarked to me, the other day, after I had remonstrated with him on the exorbitance of the demands of the gentlemen of the medical profession, in the articles of visits and advice, when compared with those of people of quality. "Madam," said he, "the man who goes to the Deserts of Arabia and discovers a plant or a root of a new genus, discovers nothing—absolutely nothing. It is the dull, home-bound, closet-pent, high-dried, reflecting chemist that makes the grand discovery when he lights upon the properties which it possesses; and also, and particularly, when the physician discovers how the said properties act upon the system. Yes, madam," continued the eloquentthe learned M. D., "theirs are the valuable discoveries—the only discoveries, I may say; without which a lump of bitter aloes would be of no more value than a cabbage-stump; but which, with the doctor's knowledge of the virtues of a medicine, and the how, the when, and the where to apply it, will put twenty years of new life into a worn-out and BADLY-TREATED constitution! Indeed, no properly-qualified medical man will give his advice until "regularly called in." I wish every empiric in the empire would take example by the independent gentlemen of the faculty. Since, therefore, ALL the merit is due to the last discoverer, namely, the EFFICIENT ADVISER, and NONE to the incapable possessor, I feel confident your superior sense will suggest the impropriety of my acting by advice in this particular.

Homethrust. But, madam, I-

Mr. Q. Ah, you were about to urge, also, that they are nearly related to us—the very butt-end of every Tale of a Tub, though drawn up in a Foundling Hospital; and, to make a long story short, I am willing to admit it at once; but, at the same time, I am totally unable to discern the difference between a distant relation and a near relation, when they are both poor; for the distant relation puts in his claim as strong and as bold as though he was indebted to the same parents for his existence as ourselves, and had an equal claim with us upon them, to be maintained here, now that they have brought him here; and, as to his being a distant relation, he very satisfactorily does away with that distinction, or, indeed, rather quibble, by sticking as close to us, while we have any thing left to give, as our own passions do while we have any money to spend! But, truly, it matters nothing after all; for we are entirely drained of cash at the present juncture. Paying electioneering expenses; -keeping open-houses for patriot-makers, whose own were shut up the while as close as

their own hearts ;-providing them with glass-coaches, to go down to open our close borough-for the good of their country and the benefit of their health, and to visit their dear friends, whom they had not seen since the dissolution of the last parliament and the late king, and whom, but for our interference, they would not have seen till their own dissolution, if then-have made a grand haul on our purse. Then, returning the last gale of rent to the tenants, as it is called in the newspapers, which, you know, the wretches had not wherewith to pay; and, by the by, our liberality on that assemblage of those same gentry will, I fear, oblige Mr. Q. in a few days, to call a meeting of creditors into a corner. There will be a contrast with a vengeance for you; and, as some, not quite so charitably disposed as we are, will laconically add, with a rise of the head and a jut-out of the chin, "deservedly so." Then, again, there was our strewing the roads with gold-dust and throwing silver into the silvery stream of the sea, as our own travelling abroad may be very properly denominated; keeping houses in town and country, and splendid equipages in both establishments, at the time of our peregrinations, and making use of neither; and various other methods of squandering property, which are known only to people of the very first consequence-and to them only at certain seasons-have left us at present without any finances at all.

Homethrust. Madam, I perceive you misapprehend my drift completely: you draw erroneous conclusions before I had well begun; indeed, before I had begun at all. I did not come here to solicit for your unfortunate relative, nor does he in-

tend to become a solicitor himself, either.

Mrs. Q. O, ho! That, indeed, places things quite in another posture. What, then, has happened, that he should be so wonderfully altered all at once, as not to want money now? Why, I thought I knew "the man" sufficiently, so that if he even did not need it, he would, nevertheless, solicit it, notwithstanding. Like the drovers bringing black cattle to "Smiffil" every Monday morning, though there be no buyers in the market, merely to keep up the charter for the butchers.

Homethrust. He has now assumed, madam, a somewhat more daring character, which, to be subdued at all, must be resolutely attacked at once. He wears more the stern air of one who makes a formal demand of payment for solid work done—(work, long sought to be undertaken and tardily performed at length)—than the mournful aspect of a man who asks, because his dire necessities compel him: as he assured me that, one of those days, when you least expect him, and

least of all desire a visit from him, he will come here, with his ragged family in his hand, and take up his quarters, with you, in this very parlour.

Mrs. Q. With his ragged family in his hand—the bear!

Homethrust. His ragged family is, indeed, the staff on

which he leans.

Mrs. Q. Why, it will be the Bear and Ragged Staff personified. Should the Warwick peerage become extinct, he will, assuredly, have presumption enough to lay claim to the dormant earldom! The famous Guy will become as great a bugbear as Guy Faux.

Homethrust. "And," added he, "let me see, then, who dare turn me out." I confess, such a disclosure astounded me, at first, much more than it astonishes you now, as the avowal

was not at all consonant with his previous conduct.

Mrs. Q. It is not possible—and yet "it is" the man. A solicitor! yes, one more like an attorney, with his long brief, filled with "notwithstandings" and "whereases," than a solicitor, with a memorial, in which every word tells, and, instead of repetitions, ending with a petition, in which his suit is pressed with all the energy of distress, "and your petitioner will ever pray." But as he has the baseness not to blush at such a threat, depend upon it, he will not want

temerity to brave it out.

Homethrust. That he and they will come, is now to me as a fact that has already happened. But this is the way that I intend to show my friendship towards you, madam. I would advise you to prepare a lawful reception for them. Were I you, I would have five or six stout members of "the force" in an ante-chamber; and, as soon as your intrusive visiters make their appearance, give them over to their care; and, instead of their living upon free quarters with you, let the magistrates give them close quarters till the quarter-sessions. It were prudent, madam, to order able-bodied men when you send for the officers; fellows that are all bodies and no souls, or, ones whose souls no train of miseries can penetrate, which amounts precisely to the same thing; water-proof souls, madam—tear-proof, I mean.

Mrs. Q. You are out of your senses, sure, or you must think mine have forsaken me. Suppose we had a drawingroom full of fashionables at the time of the beseechment, or rather the besiegement,—why, the very tale of a poor family of relations calling upon us for the means to live, would be more delicious food for them to devour than any entertain-

ment we could furnish them with.

Homethrust. [In other words, it would afford your fashionable visiters more genuine satisfaction were you to hold up a clenched fist to your nearest kindred, than to extend an open

hand to perfect strangers—even though themselves.]

Mrs. Q. Or, suppose we had no company at all. pretty subject for small-talk gossip among the new metropolitan servants, in that great arena or pandæmonium for scandal in low life, the kitchen. Delightful to hear, through the key-hole, the announcement of the fashionable arrivals, not, indeed, from the Corinthian columns of the Morning Post, but from Wait's own Gothic block-head. Thus: "There is a pack of poor relations to my lady, my mistress, in the parlour, who would be much more at home and at their ease in the pantry;" and then, or rather now, how pleasant to hearken. by anticipation, to the vulgar enlargement upon that. Imagine that you hear the footman, just advanced from being cow-boy: "Poor creatures, I felt more for their awkward situation among the people that were there than I did for their wretched situation in life." Next, a voice from the interior of Africa (for we have a very prepossessing black-amoor, furnished from one of the Temperances) aping the white savages with his rich southern comments; "When I changed one of dere plates, de poor fellow tanked me as much as doe I provided de entertainement." And, finally, the first lineryman that was fearful of having the freedom of the city conferred upon him, in the servants'-hall, with his self-interested pitiable whine: "My fear is that they have heard of my disgrace, and their chief is come, that he may step into my shoes before they are well-fashioned to my feet." Cousin Homethrust, Cousin Homethrust, you make no allowance for our long line of ancestors.

Homethrust. [Indeed I do, though, even where it is connected in the middle with a yard of hemp.]—That there is something in what you advance, madam, would be futile for me to deny, as it is you who utter it; and I now begin to think that he greatly coincided with your opinion; as he hinted that he should gain nothing by paying you such a

visit in the country.

Mrs. Q. No, certainly; every body there knows that we have a long sweeping train of beggarly relations dependent upon us, or longing to be so—as who has not? but here in London, this Paradise of Fashion! we are as though we were angels dropped from the clouds.

Homethrust. The very first and brightest, madam [the fallen

angels).

Mrs. Q. For angels, you know, have no relations—there being in heaven "neither marriage nor giving in marriage."

Homethrust. From which you draw, madam, that in their not entering on the holy estate of matrimony consists their

felicity.

Mrs. Q. Surely, it must be one of their supreme blessings not to be pestered eternally by a long draggle-tailed troop of kindred, which this marriage mainly helps us mortals to. That the not having such dirty appendages makes their sum of bliss complete, may be readily believed, when we know that in the having such excruciating tortures consists our greatest earthly misery. Could I but root out of a poor relation the passion of hope, I could behold in him Milton's hell in bolder characters than the bard has drawn it. Poverty is a disease—a taking disease, for when a poor mouth can neither beg nor borrow, it will do worse.

Homethrust. But, then, nothing is easier or simpler than to deny any relationship whatever to them. Why, any group of paupers, that got possession of your name and station in society, from the common Directories, which lie open on every counter, in every shop, in every street, in Augusta Trinobantum, might, thus lay claim to part of your estate; and, after they had gained the portion of it that their modesty sought, be enabled, by laying it out economically in law, to

make a bold push for the remainder.

Mrs. Quorum. It would never make for us. What their tongues choose to assert their very faces would back them in: and there is, throughout the gang, too strong, too obstinate, and, in a word, too determined a family likeness, for any rational being to cherish a hope ever to be able to stare them out of countenance. Perkins Warbeck was but a fool to them for that. And they are too well versed in the family anecdotes, not to be competent to furbish up a jest-book for the entertainment of our dear friends. I had certainly better call and see them, and endeavour to persuade them how very poor we are. Yet I do not know. Paying them a visit would just furnish them with a proper excuse for returning it. But, as they are coming without any pretence whatever, I had better take a purse with me, and let them lower over that; and divert their mind from the visit, by allowing them to divide the booty at home.

Homethrust. [Booty it may well be called, as any thing you give, they, in a manner, help themselves to.]—I think, madam, that would bribe them from returning what you

would much rather be without.

Mrs. Q. It is surely my better way.—Then, Cousin Homethrust, that will but open a new vein of unreasonable expectation for that collateral branch of our family, as the Widow Di Etiquet every where boasts herself to be, though in the most detached manner from the conversation on the tapis. She has newly thrown off her first mourning, or weeds and tearless weeper, for her defunct lord. I am sure, it is high time she should make a second choice. It would accomplish one grand object, it would change her name; though even that metamorphosis would not take her altogether off our hands. No, no, that is too great a blessing to be hoped for on this side the grave.

Homethrust. Why, I understood her father and your mo-

ther were brother and sister, madam.

Mrs. Q. Lord! her father was old enough to be my grandfather. Besides, our family spelled their name quite in a different manner from hers; and, to do her family justice, they did so too—ours, of course, taking the lead in that as in all things. But she chose to disapprove of the handy work of her fathers, and new-modelled her name, as she would herself, if she knew how, into something fashionable and French. She now writes "ETIQUETTE," spelling it like our's to a T, and a final E into the bargain. But, Lord! I forgive the contemptible being; we all take after our betters, you know.

Homethrust. [It were well we imitated them in their better

parts.]

Mrs. Q. What makes me so positive as to her father's great age is, that it is the longest thing I can remember his retiring from the business of linen-draper, and taking a box a short drive beyond Hyde Park Corner. He then would become Doctor of Laws, and actually sought for the degree; but to have "LL. D." tacked to his name, for one that would think of the honor, a thousand would remember the disgrace namely, "Late Linen Draper." He then got himself presented at Court, and meeting the Viscountess of Tinerana at Queen Charlotte's drawing-room, for the lack of something to say suiting the place and the presence, he complained to her ladyship of the great depression in trade—for, like a snail, he always carried his house on his back. Lady T., looking fixedly on the long ruffles which terminated his shirt-sleeves, retorted, she believed he had good foundation for what he said, for she perceived he had a great deal of linen on hands!

Homethrust. [I'll sound your ladyship on another key.]—
The first succur, because the most importune upstart, is cer-

tainly a disgrace to the family tree.

Mrs. Q. Ah, could we by any means prune it or lop it off altogether. But, unfortunately, this is not the season nor the place, now that the tree itself is newly transplanted into so extremely different an atmosphere and clime.

Homethrust. He might be driven to desperation by a few well-concocted reports. Let me see. Did he never set fire

to his house?

Mrs. Q. He? He never had a house to burn.

Homethrust. No; but it is next a miracle if he has lived in London for twenty years, and has not been burned out; and if he only resided in one at the time of the conflagration, it is a miracle complete if he escaped the fury of the devouring element and that of the tongues of Censure and Suspicion also. Or, if he has been up at the Old Bailey (were it but to bear witness for an innocent man), it is stranger still if Scandal cannot find room for him in the dock.

Mrs. Q. Ah, telling a man the world is too good for him, is not the way to persuade him to quit it; no more is giving him to understand that he is unfit to live, the method to

convince him that he is fit to die.

Homethrust. Then there are various ways of gaining a livelihood in London, which, though honest enough, are not considered to be too respectable. Such as "working" sheriff (who, if he have but line enough, does certain execution). There are also informers in all their grades. It sometimes happens that one of those gentry mounts a stage, on which he observes twelve passengers, and immediately sets them all at sixes and sevens\*. Bakers, you perceive, madam, are not the only people who cheat the public by counting thirteen to the dozen. Then, he knows town: strangers may be led a dance for weeks and weeks together. There are also shellfish-mongers, alias, oyster-men; undertakers' mutes and parish bell-men; grave-diggers and resurrection-men; link-men and crossing-sweepers; wall-chalkers and bill-stickers; quack doctors' bill-distributors and placard carriers, which latter display all the requisites of a circulating-library book: they are generally hired by the day; exhibit a legible type; have plenty of quotations (to the honor of printing, seldom visible); with leaves torn out, or not there; have numerous readers; are hot-pressed, half-bound in boards, and lettered on the back. Mrs. Q. Worse, worse—infinitely worse.

Homethrust. Then there are others treading on the heels of law, or law treading on the heels of them: such as a second in a duel, often a more imposing personage than the poor principal himself. He has to dictate the challenge; be the

<sup>\*</sup> Twelve passengers only are allowed by law.

honorable bearer of it; to call at Bow-street; to attend the duellist to the place of "execution;" to measure the ground, give the word "fire," and surrender his "charge" to the authorities. There are, also, spunging-house keepers and possession-men: the one takes the debtor into his keeping and the other all he is worth. And, lastly, a puffer at a mock-auction. Here he has fashionable clothes provided for him, with the pockets well filled with money: a shed to screen him from the weather, and the utmost respect and deference paid him by his own employer; ay, his words are registered with the religious observance of an oracle, and a minute taken of every syllable that falls from his lips. This is the only station in life in which a master and man change places. Although in no danger of losing his life, there is a price set upon his head; his very nod is the mainspring to the whole machine; for, to wind up all, unless his sinciput perform the part of pendulum to the piece of clock-work, the hammer will not strike, nor the "puppets" move. however, is a station which requires more discretion and economy of money than he can muster.—And various other amateur professions, which can be taken up and laid down at pleasure, as the season or climate admits or the penury of the wo-begone wretch suggests. If he could be persuaded, or rather his acquaintance, that these are his day haunts, night resorts, and employments, he could hardly help running away from himself.

Mrs. Q. It is all to no purpose. I must succumb—I must succumb.

(Exeunt.

## ACT IV.

## SCENE, THE SAME.-MR. QUORUM, BELINDA.

Mr. Quorum. There are men of all countries in London, my dear, who, to keep from being miserable for a time, within the walls of a prison, would be happy to confine themselves in the bonds of wedlock for life. There are Irishmen, who, if they found a motive, in the shape of a fortune, in this country, would never quit it more; and there are Scotchmen, who court that inducement, that they may not seek their bread in the land o' caiks. As for the country we are in, I pass it over as quickly as I would were the map of the world under my finger; for the same reason that, while abusing all the absent inclusive, the present company is always excepted. Still, you may imagine I said something remarkably bitter against it and its natives for all that; so I warn you against them all three. There are also Frenchmen, Italians, Germans, and Spaniards. It is not necessary to declare war against them on

he present occasion. Besides, they are foreigners; and I nust bear in mind that I was a foreigner myself when in Paris.

Belinda. Dear papa, the first are our own countrymen, and he last our friendly relations; and I am sure there is no fear

of me taking a liking to any one.

Mr. Q. May be not; but there is great fear of some one taking a liking to you, and stealing you away. In which case, as I cannot afterwards interfere, I caution you beforehand. Your fortune-hunter would do wrong in luring you away; you worse, in allowing yourself to be enticed from home; and I still worse, in receiving you back again: for the receiver of the stolen goods is deemed in law to be worse than the thief. I must also hinder you from going abroad too gaily; for I know of no reason why the party who exposes the property too loosely for sale, to those who have not wherewith to buy, should not be equally culpable with the receiver and the thief. This, certainly, is not yet law; so much the better: I shall have the merit of proposing it to parliament myself; so you see how particular I must be, lest, like Licinius Stolo, a commonwealthsman of ancient Rome, I be the first offender punished by my own edict.

Belinda. We visit only two or three families; and, with the exception of those who are married already, the rest are of my own sex.

Mr. Q. You being added to the number, will make one more inducement.

Belinda. Besides, sir, as my own happiness is so nearly concerned.

Mr. Q. What did you say about being concerned? I have something to say to that too.

Belinda. I say, papa, that as my present conduct must be so closely connected with my future welfare, I shall be very careful where to place my choice, being, as I just intimated, most interested myself.

Mr. Q. Most interested! the very reason why you are less able to think aright. Did you never hear of a physician in good health attending on a brother of the faculty, who was confined to his bed, although the other's master in the art and his own life at stake?

Belinda. Frequently, sir; but which doctor, do you say,

was most interested in the recovery of the patient?

Mr. Q. I am at fault there; but as doctors differ, I may be allowed sometimes to disagree with myself. Well, to improve as we go, did you never observe, at the assizes, how a prisoner is not allowed to dispose of himself? and few, out of Bedlam,

are mad enough to aver that he is not a party very much interested in what is going forward. No, no; the law, wisely foreseeing (before he was born) that he would be an unfit person to judge in his own case—because, being most interested,—has provided a judge for that particular purpose, who is, perhaps, the least interested man in the community, and a jury also, who, if found to be in any way interested (directly or indirectly) with the business brought before them, will be instantly sent about their own business. Nay, the very culprit himself may challenge the jury round, and get the better of them all without fighting any one of them; and, what is rather remarkable, this is the only case in which a challenge is lawful, if we except that bold flourish of defiance given, to no one in particular, to be sure, by that hereditary man of valour, the Champion at the Coronation.

Belinda. But, dear papa, I have done nothing that should

disable me from judging for myself.

Mr. Q. No; but see what follows immediately after. It is just as easy to revoke a judge's sentence as it is to recal the sentence which you pronounce upon yourself when you commit matrimony. Ay, and absolutely easier: for a criminal may be pardoned if it should please his gracious Sovereign to grant him an amnesty; but the false husband or wife must do something not to deserve it, before the innocent party can procure a divorce.—But here comes your mother; she will finish the advice that I begun.

(Exit.

(Enter Mrs. Quorum.)

Mrs. Quorum. Why, daughter, you look horridly to-day. You surely did not take the senna tea I made for you last night. Nothing will do you any good but senna; and even senna will do you no good unless you take it.

Belinda. I found myself much better after I retired to my

chamber, madam.

Mrs. Q. Ay, I warrant you got better for no other purpose than to vex your poor mother, by disobeying her commands. It might be all very well, miss, if you made me acquainted with your intentions—if you told me you resolved to recover of your own accord. And, pray, why did you not take the medicine which I got the physician to prescribe and the 'pothecary to "accurately prepare" and "carefully compound" for you, the other night? Do you know, or rather do you care, that a bachelor of medicine charges a brace of guineas every time that he feels your pulse, though in the faculty's own mincemeat manner? The most fashionable bachelor of love in all St. James' would take you manfully

by the hand and waist, and dance and waltz you round the room the entire night, for a dinner which that sum would cover, and of which we might all partake.

Belinda. There was written on the label, "Three spoonsfall to be taken;" and, as I did not know whether tea- or table-spoons were meant, I endeavoured to recover without

using either.

Mrs. Q. You might venture, I think, to use table-spoons, or, as you say yourself, do without either, but take a good drink out of the bottle. I often enough told you—for an obedient child, at least—that you could never take too much playsic at your years; and, if you have forgotten that I told you so, you know that the same "doctrine" is laid down by every mother in the three kingdoms.

Belinda. Dear mamma, it reminded me of the salt-water

at Brighton.

Mrs. Q. Very well, miss; and, for that very reason, if you took a slipper-bath full of it, it could do you no harm.—But, my dear, what has been the subject of your conversation with your father?

Belinda. Papa, madam, has been cautioning me against a

bad husband.

Mrs. Q. O, Lord! I hope you have not had the assurance child, to fall in love, without first consulting me! I have long, very long, consoled the ancient, though often, indeed, outraged, dignity of our house by supposing that we should have one obedient member at least in the family.

Belinda. A maiden may think of marriage, without love, madam. There is no mention made of it, that I remember, in a marriage-settlement: Cupid is too heathenish a name to

appear in a Christian compact.

Mrs. Q. Now, indeed, you speak the language becoming my daughter, without the least tincture of freethinking; and you will at once perceive how much better you can discern a proper object of your affections. I should say of your reason, or your cogitation, or indeed your election, and that by ballot, too, by looking with your own eyes, than by allowing yourself—a full-grown girl, to be led by that childish god wherever he chooses to rove. He was an urchin when I was a girl, and yet I could never be deluded by his wiles. Of all capidities, or "unlawful or unreasonable longings," it is surely downright Cupidity to allow your eyes to become the papils of that blind idle wanderer who has none of his own. Love, my dear, is a disease that, like the measles, the smallpox, and the chin-cough, we catch when we are young, and

precisely in the same manner, too—by being in the company of those who are ill of the same disorder; and the only way as yet found out to avoid it is to keep from where the patients are.

Belinda. It is so far like them, madam, that we can catch the dear contagion only once in our life.

Mrs. Q. Yes, and that we may be sure to catch it, we pur-

sue it assiduously till we have caught it.

Belinda. I have heard you blame your parents, madam, for not procuring you those short-staying disorders when you were young; as the not having them then has kept you in continual fear throughout the whole of your after-life. Would it not then be better to get over the other, while we are in our youth, in the same manner?

Mrs. Q. It would be much better to get it out of the way, by banishing it altogether; which we would do to the other infections if we had the same means in our power that we

have of guarding against this.

Belinda. They are all four requisite disorders, madam—

they clear the blood.

Mrs. Q. Ay, truly, and a curious way the last one has of doing it. Were you to give your hand to a plebeian at the altar, for instance, that would be clearing his blood with a witness, or, indeed, a brace of witnesses, by mixing our pure crystal stream (that has run unsullied for the last just-past nine hundred and some odd score of years, or, as one of my maternal ancestors stoutly maintained, since the Flood) with his muddy puddle of yesterday.

Belinda. Then, madam, you do not approve of the disco-

veries of Harvey?

Mrs. Q. Indeed I do, though: I highly prize his Meditations

among the Tombs.

Belinda. I speak of Harvey, madam, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood; not Hervey, who loved to stroll where the blood was at a stagnation!

Mrs. Q. Ah, you got that piece of knowledge out of some circulating library. You never will take a leaf out of my

book.

Belinda. Were I to take such a liberty with your book, madam, that would be drawing knowledge from such source.

Mrs. Q. My heart would be at ease were I once certain of our house standing its ten centuries. Those fortune-hunters are complaisancy itself until they obtain their ends, till which time they will not leave off bowing and scraping; and will repeat them so awkwardly withal, that they seem inclined

never to give over the attempts till they have made a polite salute.—But you talk of me censuring my parents for their neglecting to possess me with those very desirable and love-like infections; will you, now, be satisfied if I provide you with the latter, which you so prettily connect with the former?

Belinda. Am I not too young, madam?

Mrs. Q. That's a fault that will mend considerably every day.

Belinda. Besides, madam, you blamed your parents for not procuring them for you when you were unable to procure them for yourself. But though love is a disease that resembles those in some points, it differs from them in others: one dissimilarity is, that it can never be thoroughly eradicated; such being the case, we seek for a companion who is suffering under the same affliction, to keep us in countenance.

Mrs. Q. Love is more like the small-pox than any of the others; for, when the face becomes altered, both vanish for

ever.

Belinda. Formerly it might be so with regard to the one, madam; but since Jenner's time, the face comes off victorious without a scar, and during all time love remains the same. Even should a Jenner in the Art of Love arise, he'd find Ovid too orthodox, too persuasive, a practitioner to be explained away or beaten out of the field. Tiberius himself could only banish him all over the world; and his predecessor, who engraved his own name on every ensuing year, could not erase his name from the Augustan age.

Mrs. Q. Ah, to bring you to a proper sense of what wedlock is, we must make you a ward in Chancery, or keep you

under lock and key at home.

Belinda. The Court of Chancery, madam, as far as regards

our sex, may be styled the Legal Nunnery.

Mrs. Q. With the errors of popery excepted, I grant; for when the parents choose to become satisfied, the child may become dutiful.

Belinda. It is only changing a veil for a shroud, madam. A voluntary veil of lace can only hide from the world, not ourselves, the tears which flow from disappointed love; the shroud of the law will not conceal the bendings of the inclination from either; and, like the shroud in the grave, cannot confine its prisoner one moment beyond the time ordained.

Mrs. Q. Your father always mars what he intends to mend. Instead of cautioning you against a bad husband, he should have ordered you to discard from your mind all thoughts of any husband at all; or, what would be still better, instruct

you not to think of such an insipid piece of vanity, unless told to do so by your mother. I wish he had given me a little of that advice before I married him. It would have spared him the trouble of burdening his mind with it these twenty years past, as you would not have been here now to hear it. I might have hearkened to him on such a subject then, though I would by no means do so at present, miss.

Belinda. No, madam, not now that you know the pleasures of a wedded life. But papa speaks more kindly of you, madam, as he says you are capable of giving very valuable

advice whenever you please to do so.

Mrs. Q. Does he? I wonder at that. But the truth is, he is a well-meaning man, though he has an extremely antiquated method of his own of showing it; and, as he is aware that he is incapable of giving good instruction himself, he refers you to me, whom he well knows to be perfectly competent.

Belinda. Yes, madam; for he says that as you received very excellent advice from your own parents, and never made the least use of it, you can transfer it now to your own children as fresh and as wholesome as when you first received it!

Mrs. Q. Why, that last was nearer his compliment, I'll be sworn—the vernacular brute!—But, my dear, how much more happy do you expect to be when you have a husband, than you are now without one?

Belinda. O, madam, a woman can never be said to have a home, so as to be mistress there, until she is blessed with a

rational companion—a head for it.

Mrs. Q. Very fine! And pray, miss, what description of husband do you just now happen to take a fancy to? Suppose you marry a sportsman. He will leave you, to follow the chase; and, after he has tamed you into a wife, will pass his time merrily away in making wildfowl as tame as he would wish his spouse to be.

Belinda. And in the evening, he will bring me home what he has been pursuing all the day; could I reasonably expect

more?

Mrs. Q. Yes; but sportsmen-gallants go fowling now with the same aim that they go wooing: namely, to display to the world the conquests which they have achieved; and as to their bringing home in the evening the object of their pursuit during the day, I have some doubts as to the courteous welcome they would always receive.

Belinda. I am surprised to hear this from you, madam,

who are so great an admirer of old sayings—one bird in the

hand and two in the bush, for example.

Mrs. Q. Ay, but the allurement lies in the glory of the chase, and not in the value of the game, as I said before.—Should you wed a citizen, he will bury you alive in the city.

Belinda. And I can have every new fashion his house and connexion yield before they are adopted by the beau monde.

Mrs. Q. Then you will have the fashions before they become authorized as such; and you will be ridiculed as much for wearing what will be of too new a pattern, as you would be contemned and despised for wearing the very same when they become threadbare.

Belinda. Or any rarity I take a fancy to at another's house, I may get in exchange for some superfluity at my own; and

so save money and be still in the fashion.

Mrs. Q. It will be all one in the price. Your neighbour will remember what description of payment he is to receive for his "rarity." It is like waiting till a public sale is over, to save the auction-duty; not recollecting that the proprietor will think of his own profit in preference to the government tax. Resides, you will then be the only bidder; and where there is no competition, there will be exorbitant extortion.—And should you unite yourself to a man of fashion?

Belinda. He will find that I shall make as fine a figure at the Queen's drawing-room, as he does at Her Majesty's levee; and display as much taste in ordering a gay comedy to be performed as the author did justice to himself in writing

it\*.

Mrs. Q. Do you imagine that you possess charms and accomplishments sufficient to stay the attention of the travelled Inconstant Mirable, or the still more finished gentleman, the Mirabell of that quintessence of elegant refinement, Madame Millamant?

Belinda. When such lofty wooers become humble suitors, madam, it is evident they perceive in the complacent smile of the maiden beloved what they failed of finding in the forced loud laugh of the many. Such humble suitors, madam——

Mrs. Q. Humble suitors! humble bees, rather, that rove about from flower to flower, from rose-bud to rose-bud, from hot-bed to hot-bed, from honey-suckle to honey-suckle, from arbour to arbour, from garden to garden, from enclosure to enclosure, and from estate to estate; who are rebels to discipline, acknowledge no queen, and know no bounds. Fellows

<sup>\*</sup> The abuse with which the last successful comedy, Money, was received by a radical weekly paper is a disgrace to criticism. If the public approbation, during the season, do not reverse the judgment of the reviewer, will the anagram of the author's name:

SIR EDWARD LYTTON BULWER, BARONET——READ TWENTY WORDS; WALL NOT, LUBBER.

who are particular wooers to-day, general lovers to-morrow, indifferent visiters the next day, and are as free as ever or as air by the time the honey-moon should be on the wane. Idle drones, that swarm and pitch every where; and, when you endeavour to know the meaning of their buzzing, by putting the plain, straightforward, sensible question, "matrimony," find, that they suddenly stop short with a "hum!"

Belinda. Granting, madam, that they do sting where they

light, like other drones, they go off disarmed.

Mrs. Q. But leave their sting.—And, suppose you choose a soldier to be your wedded lord? He may get what he long desired, though in a different way from his wishes—a release from all his vows, the second engagement he enters.

Belinda. In compliment to his bravery, his place must be supplied by his country immediately; and widows follow their

country's example.

Mrs. Q. What say you to an antiquary? There is Sir Leripoop Fossil. His estate is divided from ours by a quick-set hedge and ditch, and he is nearly related to us besides. I always thought he wished the hedge sunk into the ditch and the cousin dwindled into the wife. It is but proper, indeed, to preserve two old stocks amidst the exotic variety that overspreads the three kingdoms.

Belinda. His estate is encumbered, madam.

Mrs. Q. Encumbered?

Belinda. Yes, with a fop; it is mortgaged to a thousand expensive follies; and Sir Leripoop is so wedded to them, that he will never die for love.

Mrs. Q. I fear not. A "gipsy" mummy would have more charms in its little finger for him than you would in your whole body. He cares for nothing till it has performed its part.

Belinda. For which reason, he never recognises an actor till he meets him in the green-room, where he has not a word to say. Still his indifference would not generally, now a days, hinder an alliance. No girl of spirit would refuse risking a little adventitious heart-ache for the sake of enjoying a married woman's privileges of going where she likes, saying what she pleases, and dashing in such a style as even detraction can scarcely censure.

Mrs. Q. You appear to be so ready for all kinds of husbands, that I fear you must have one of each before you take

a decided liking to any one in particular.

Belinda. One kind one, will be all that I shall ever wish for.

Mrs. Q. And, like all disobedient romance-readers, you will

so display "the ruling passion strong in marriage," that you

weary pilgrimage to Re-Gretna Green. (Excunt.

## SCENE II.

POORLY-FURNISHED APARTMENTS AT THE WEST-END. Mr. and Mrs. Stipend.

Mr. Stipend. My uncle and family arrived in town, do you

sav, my dear?

Mrs. Stipend. Yes, my love; and our near relative, but dearer friend, Mr. Homethrust, not content with raising us from actual indigence to comparative affluence, has been to see them, and tried to mortify my aunt by touching her conscience with a melancholy recital of our lowly condition; which, as he made it untrue, he considered himself entitled to misrepresent. The result of the first part of the conversation proved a failure. He urged, in our behalf, what excellent economists we had become of late, and the many services we could make a hundred or two perform. Nay, he said, with £50, or even a smaller trifle, we could accomplish wonders. But she cut it all short with one of her conclusive, because evasive, answers, by remarking—that if we could do so very much with so very little, it was not at all unreasonable to suppose that we could manage to live in a pretty genteel and homely style upon nothing at all! The conclusion of his argument had a different effect. He intimated that we were preparing to wait upon them ourselves-than which, nothing was farthest from our thoughts: -so, to anticipate the visit, she has just sent word before that she will take tea with us this evening.

Mr. S. Thus the rich honor their poorer neighbours, by diminishing their little, uninvited, except, indeed, by themselves, while the unfortunate must await an invitation ere they can return the compliment; and, on reflection, find that they are not at home in a double sense. Such is the partiality of man to himself, that he who has been ungrateful to all

mankind, will yet expect gratitude from others.

Mrs. S. What necessity is there, my dear, for that gloomy reflection? You know, we are independent of her and the world now, as far as the meaning of that word will admit. So, if we can make nothing else of her, we can make some sport for ourselves: we can laugh while it is going forward, and at her attempts at revenge afterwards.

Mr. S. She is above our ridicule, for she is below our con-

Mrs. S. At best, despondency will only beget despondency. Pity, with all its melancholy train, vanishes with our youth. To succeed in the future, we must smile ever in defeat.

Mr. S. I have long known that, my love. The old maxim,

"Those that win may laugh," is just as true when transposed into the modern axiom, "Those that laugh may win." Still the rich make themselves at ease abroad as well as at home. When at home, they make the poor man's abode their own by condescending to witness his misery; and when travelling as inside passengers, when the weather is favourable, they lay claim to the sunny side of the vehicle, and let the outsiders shift for themselves, inside or where they can. However, I will be ruled by you, Maria. But, though I have a high opinion of Mr. Homethrust's talents on the whole, I have very little on the score of his applications: for I invariably observe that he need never leave home to solicit for the unfortunate; as when he does, he is obliged to go exactly as far again as he at first supposed necessary before he meets with He may possibly strike a light in her hard heart; but, believe me, it will be like striking fire out of a flint, a piece comes off at every spark that is produced; and what remains is as cold, dark, and unfeeling as before it passed the ordeal of the operator's hand.

Mrs. S. Well, my dear, flint though it be, it may unconsciously help to light a real fire; and we do not need her aid

at present.

Mr. S. And for that very reason I would decline accepting it, were any offered; for any thing she gives in the shape of money won't lose the interest when she comes to boast of it.

Mrs. S. O, let her report what she pleases. She is so well known, that she will elicit as little praise as we think proper

to throw away, and she can make no reprisals.

Mr. S. Be it so. (knocking.) Lest this should be she, and my presence restrain her natural characteristics, I will leave you to receive her ladyship.

(Exit.

(Enter Mrs. Quorum.)

Mrs. S. You are welcome to London, aunt; and I regret

not to better apartments.

Mrs. Q. Dear Maria, make no punctilious apologies—be seated—pray be seated. Excuse me for being so pressing in your own house—your own room, I should say. You know that I have such an aversion to ceremony, that I have often refrained from bestowing charity, merely that I might avoid the toil and turmoil of receiving thanks.

Mrs. S. Modern thanks, madam, are hardly any thing else than average specimens of what would be given for greater

benefits, and you are right in waiving that form.

Mrs. Q. Yes, Maria, the art of charity is like the art of fencing: the grand rule to be observed in both is, "To give—and not receive." You will pardon my masculine simile.

Mrs. S. There is another; an old, approved method practised by well-meaning people, madam, of bestowing charity, by which they avoid what you so much dread. It is this: they send their gifts to the unhappy, without informing them from whence they came; and, BY THUS BECOMING THE DEPUTY OF HEAVEN, BY THEIR DONATION OR PRESENT, THEY MAKE HEAVEN THEIR DEPUTY IN RECEIVING THEIR THANKS.

Mrs. Q. But a confession or profession of poverty is so common a practice now a days, from the high soaring patriot down to the grovelling mendicant, that it requires the spirit of divination to distinguish between genuine misery and "impudent avaricious beggary."—However, I am delighted at finding you out at last. The very day we arrived in town I made all possible inquiries for your residence. I sent to all the hotels and family hotels, taverns and restaurateurs, cafés, coffee-houses, and recesses—but all to no purpose.

Mrs. S. Your messenger had sooner heard of us at the chandler's-shop or the green-grocer's, madam; he might learn

there the place of our abode.

Mrs. Q. Or, perhaps, by looking for your husband's name on the great slate in the bar of the ale-house, or seeking for himself in the—what do you call it?—the tap-tap-room. He did not. But I myself inquired for you at all the conversaziones, fandangos, routes, fêtes, fêtes-champêtres, morning and evening concerts of ancient music, balls, plays, assemblies, déjeunés and déjeunés à la fourchettes, and even at Almanac's—but no tidings.

Mrs. S. The bad state of the weather, madam, hindered us from looking into the latter. Indeed, the fair promises made us there proving so very contrary to our paid-for expectations, we resolved to place no farther confidence in as-

surances which we could put no trust in.

Mrs. Q. Mr. Quorum also inquired for you in the lobby of the House of Commons and in the nest of committee-rooms adjoining; at least, I gave him strict injunctions so to

do-but not the smallest account.

Mrs. S. Our sex are not admitted into that honourable house, madam; and my husband does not care to go where I cannot accompany him. Indeed, he intended to pay a visit, this very day, to a poor pride-swoln family close by, to whom I am sure he would not have been welcome, at least to the awkward, fashion-pretending, beg a vah old madam of the house; but notwithstanding all that, he insisted that I and all our little ones should go hand in hand together.

Mrs. Q. [What a blessed hindrance I shall make by my coming.]—We looked into all the courts of law that were sitting; and, by the same token, they do not cry "silence" there to the loudest speakers. In the Queen's Bench, there was a very entertaining trial for breach of promise; in the Common Pleas, Mr. Attorney-General was straining his lungs in a case of alimony, interesting enough, no doubt, to the parties themselves; and in the Consistory Court, the gentlemen of the long robe were endeavouring to cut in twain the Gordian-knot of the banns of matrimony which, Alexander-like, they were unable to untie. Mr. Q. said he was sure of finding you at all those places; one after the other, of course, as he found himself out of his reckoning in each; but as the newspapers did not previously announce your intention of visiting them, I predicted you were to be found at none.

Mrs. S. I believe, madam, pleasure is more frequently found when we are on some more worthy pursuit, and missed

by those who are in search of nothing else.

Mrs. Q. We went to all the exhibitions; viz. the Exhibition; the Angerstein Gallery that was, but the National Gallery that is; the British Museum; the Colosseum, where the conjuror would have shown us our own door, had we not forgotten the number of the house and the name of the street; the two Zoological Gardens; the Tower; the Monument; St. Paul's; and Westminster Abbey. It is but right to say, that although we calculated upon seeing your portraits at the first exhibition, our expectations of finding your statues at the latter did not amount to hopes. We even went into Hyde Park, many a day, with almost a dead certainty of finding you recreating yourselves—but as far off there as any where else.

Mrs. S. And farther, madam. We enjoy too much good

health to want to seek for any more in Rotten Row.

Mrs. Q. And yet, with the help of exercise, I do not know a better spot to recruit your health in than Rotten Row. At all events, I think it a more likely place to find the health you lost in your late domicile, in Seventy-five feet Long-lane, than even the place you lost it in.

Mrs.S. Hyde Park has many pleasing associations, madam, and one Corner, where the genius of Valour reclines, and which history will point out to the aspiring of future days.

Mrs. Q. By the by, I thought it strange to find the houses in your late neighbourhood disencumbered with scrapers. You perceive I have been there too.

Mrs. S. You are a close observer, madam, to have looked

for what you did not want.

Mrs. Q. You mean I rode thither. I suppose, as it is carriage company that principally frequent the east-end, such dirty appendages are sapiently considered useless. Indeed, you were so far out of the world, people that went there required beasts of burden to draw them to the place of their destination. At last, I sent every where in quest of your Cousin Homethrust, who went every where in quest of you; till at length he brought me the unspeakable pleasure of the name of your place of residence. So, I have just come to take a dish of tea with you. How is your husband; and, well remembered, this is the first time I have had the satisfaction of seeing you since your unfortunate marriage.

Mrs. S. I have long entertained hopes that it may prove

otherwise, madam.

Mrs. Q. "Entertained hopes!" Ay, to be sure you have, as who has not? Of all the beings in this world, there is no one better adapted to go a long journey than Monsieur Hope: for, although he never travels with money about him, he is sure to meet with a warm reception wherever he goes, and be hospitably entertained by every body he meets, who generally find, for their pains, that he took them in, as well as they him. And not only people of affluence alone give him a cheerful welcome, but wretches receive him with open arms who have nothing else in the wide world left within their grasp; proving the old saw, a drowning man will catch—

Mrs. S. Whatever we may lose by hope, madam, it is very certain that we can gain nothing by despair. And, now that you have condescended to visit our humble abode, my hopes

have been almost realised.

Mrs. Q. Yes, yes, my dear, hope is a very fine consolatory kind of thing; but, like all other commodities, it would be a great deal better thing than it is if there was a great deal less of it in the mart or bazaar of Misfortune than there is; it would be then valued as it ought to be.

Mrs. S. I can't perceive, madam, how abundance can di-

minish worth in a reflecting mind.

Mrs. Q. No? Why, then, do people turn up their noses at water-gruel?—the great superfluity of oatmeal, of course. I'm sure there's nothing offensive in the smell.

Mrs. S. Nor any thing very agreeable in the taste.

Mrs. Q. But, my dear, I have not had, till now, an opportunity of scolding you for that great act of disobedience—your clandestine marriage: for you contrived to make it doubly undutiful; firstly, by not marrying the man of my choice, and secondly, by marrying the man of my aversion.

Mrs. S. [Two crimes which would be construed into very substantial virtues by the majority of the fair sex.]—Madam,

Wedlock's a chain, and, like all other chains, The more 'tis forced, the weaker it becomes.

Mrs. Q. People marry sooner now than they used to do, certainly; and one would not refuse a good offer for fear of being thought a little too precipitate; but, when the prospects are unpromising, the case is altered quite.

Mrs. S. True, madam; particularly as no one can say it

is a family failing.

Mrs. Q. Ah, it is a serious consideration—a very serious affair, indeed, to be the cause of bringing a number of innocent babes into this wicked, wicked world, without even first asking permission of one's own blood relations; for though young people may think it amounts to a mere nothing to make themselves fathers and mothers, they should consider the enormity of the offence in their making their own fathers grandfathers, their mothers grandmothers, their three years' old brothers and sisters uncles and aunts, and, lastly, their aunts grandaunts; and, what is worse than all totted together, before they could thus distinguish themselves and their relations, to make a jolly dozing "amen"-clerk their father, for the express purpose of giving them away. O, when I come to consider all the circumstances of your case, such conductto say the least that can be said for it—is monstrous! It is the completion of disgrace—even a footman were preferable; the publicity of your hero's profession—that of an author perpetuates the mortification.

Mrs. S. It is certainly a serious consideration, as you say, madam, when children come into this wicked world without leave; but it is a still more serious consideration when they leave this wicked world, which they do without asking or

receiving their dear relations' assent.

Mrs. Q. Poo, what would be the use of their asking leave

to do what they would be certain to be refused?

Mrs. S. And what would be the use of asking leave to marry, madam, when the loving pair expect no better? Lovers pretty well know who would or would not grant permission; and, as it is much better to wed without a consent than with a refusal, they generally ask only the leave that is barely necessary to the union—their own; and trouble their friends and relations to give their approval when it would answer no purpose of domestic tyranny to withhold it.—You will pardon me, aunt, for giving precedence to my friends; for as they were the first to relieve our distresses, although

the others were the parties who exultingly apprised them of

our difficulties, I must needs give them the preference.

Mrs. Q. Truly, I pity you, and always did. But you do not at all offend me, Maria, in giving due praise to either; as, happily, either or both equally apply to me, for I combine in my person a sincere friend and near relative; and my object in visiting you now is—as you may perceive from the little I have already said—to endeavour to console and soothe your deeply-wounded spirit; for undoubtedly you must have your own share of troubles. I'll recount a few of ours, which will greatly help you in your misery. The adjourment of the parliament at the Christmas or Easter Recess, its prorogation at the end of the session, or even its dissolution at the whim of the minister, discompose you not—a great blessing!

Mrs. S. No, madam.

Mrs. Q. The house being up or sitting gives you no trouble—a very great blessing!

Mrs. S. Neither, madam.

Mrs. Q. Or an expected debate on the Budget seldom casts

before it any dreadful forebodings of a coming storm.

Mrs. S. All we know of THE BUDGET, madam, is what we learned, in our youth, from an elementary book on education, that it is a sort of TRAVELLING-BAG! and recent events have proved that it is carried by the MAJORITY!

Mrs. Q. And I believe "men and measures" never ruffle

your temper in the least—a superlative blessing!

Mrs. S. The only "men and measures" that at all make any portion of the family uneasy are "tailors and their strips of parchment." When the principal of a suit of clothes happens to misfit, its wearer looks for elbow-room, and finds himself in prison before the debt is due! You'll pardon mu

masculine simile, madam.

Mrs. Q. Indeed, I believe the only "men and measures" that cause you any annoyance are "tailors and their long bills," written on parchment, that they may stand the wear and tear of a continual dunning!—a blessing, I assure you, not exclusively your own!—And, I believe, a fluctuation in that political thermometer—which displays at a glance the heat of parties and their prospects—the Funds, seldom deprive you of a night's rest—an uncommon blessing!

Mrs. S. Indeed, madam, it is not one night in a hundred

that the per cents. keep us awake.

Mrs. Q. And that other thermometer, the weather gage, what shall I say of it? I believe when the glass is down at Nero, you feel its effects very acutely.

Mrs. S. In common with our rich neighbours, madam, and as the name indicates, we then feel it cruel cold!

Mrs. Q. And your husband having no claim to ancestrel honours, you don't feel discomposed that the founder of his house came not in with the Conqueror. But, I'm told he had a progenitor who was a great man's sportsman, and famous for coming in at the death.—The quarter-day comes about as frequent as the quarter-sessions; and is, I believe, very often dreaded as much by harmless people, who commit no offence at all, as the other is by abandoned wretches, who perpetrate all manner of crime with impunity; and although the year takes a leap every four, you, no doubt, have found out before now that the quarters follow their example only once in every sixteen. Ah, Maria, the quarter-day must be a great day of reckoning to all poor married people.

Mrs. S. When it happens to be a day of reckoning, it proves the contrary, madam. It is only when tenants have nothing to pay to their landlords, that the latter make it so terrible as you suppose it to be. Then, indeed, it is almost as unwelcome to a poor couple as a playfellow's wedding is to an

old maid.

Mrs. Q. My reasons for living so long unmarried proceeded from a refinement of principle, which cannot apply to a giddy girl like you, in whom I vainly endeavoured to awaken enlarged ideas. Indeed, I had many a splendid offer before your uncle aspired to the honour of my hand.

Mrs. S. I can't gainsay what happened before I was born,

madam.

Mrs. Q. There was Colonel O'Rifle, whom I sent to the right about for not wooing me in a polite and decorous manner. I'll tell you the upshot of our final separation. As he held my hand one day, admiring, as he pretended, its unmatchable whiteness and delicacy of texture; but, as I imagined, slily taking the dimensions of my finger for the wedding-ring-all on the sudden, the rude, rash, barbarous creature attempted to—ravish a kiss from my lips; but I instantly shut my face against such a proceeding. He deserved his discharge, and he got it. I should not, however, have allowed the affair to get wind; for the lover that succeeded him told me that the news flew to Court, whereupon his then Majesty gave him to understand that his services there were also dispensed with; and from the time of his dismissal, I made no farther inquiries concerning him .- The next aspirant planned a deep-laid stratagem to trepan my heart. He commissioned the late President of the Royal

Academy to paint my profile (his modesty not allowing him to request a full view); but he threw up his camel-hair pencils in mere despair, declaring, that to do any thing like justice to my eye-brows, he should have a brush formed of my own eye-lashes, so exquisitely arched were they!

Mrs. S. A flattering compliment, madam.

Mrs. Q. For what do you imagine was he elected president immediately afterwards?

Mrs. S. For not drawing your picture, I suppose.

Mrs. Q. It was an unprecedented circumstance, that a man should be placed at the head of his profession for being ignorant of his art; but such uncommon candour could not escape recognition.—I remember, also, when Lord Felltree paid his addresses to me—which addresses, by the by, I extinguished by the AMENDMENT of a better man. One day, I was reclining on the sofa, and my lord, on entering the room, threw himself at my feet, and compared me to Diana resting after the chase with one of my spaniels at my feet. Compared himself to my lap-dog and me to the goddess of hunting! What think you of that elegant compliment of other days?

Mrs. S. Indeed, madam, I think that dash of that day might be spoken with equal propriety by our modern beaux; for I have heard that some of them have as much right to call themselves puppies as their ancestors could possibly boast.

Mrs. Q. One, however, of quite a different cast of character was taken off before the doctors could be brought to agree as to the nature of his malady. Ah, he had none of the alloy of the vile leveller in him that infect almost all the present race of beings, both in the old world as well as in the new. And whenever I accepted his invitation to dinner, although I was the junior at table, the first expression that fell from his lips, after grace was solemnized, was, "What shall I have the honour of helping Miss Georgiana-Wilhelmina Etiquette to?" And, when the cloth was removed, my health was the only toast that was drank with enthusiasm during the night.

Mrs. S. It was well you had an inexhaustible fund of health, madam, else you had never come down to our time.

Mrs. Q. Those impertinents were only four of a multitude that I might have had, yet disregarded. And I was by no means singular either. A lady of my acquaintance entertained an idea that she could not so completely rule the object of her affections after it was beyond her power to choose as she did before. So, to make trial of his patience and connubial allegiance, she gave him a skein of muchtangled silk (a sort of true-lover's knot), and told him to

unravel it and ogle her at the same time. He received it respectfully, and went about the work and the love as submissively as could be well desired; and what do you think she did when he had completed his task?

Mrs. S. Got him to darn her stockings with it, I suppose; for if he was so effeminate as to do the one, it is clear he was

old woman enough to do the other.

Mrs. Q. And fit work for him, too; but for your pertness

I'll leave you in the dark as to the issue.

- Mrs. S. Being in the dark, madam, I can take a more favourable view of what transpired in the light. The capriciousness of our sex often imposes strange tasks on the lords of the soil.
- Mrs. Q. A far different humour, believe me. Men are apt to be proud of doing that which they can best perform; and to show them that the sex entirely disregard what they so highly esteem, we get them to do that which they are less able to achieve. Although instances are numberless, one will suffice, from which, perhaps, the present Countess of Paddington took the hint of the foregoing expedient. Omphale, a queen of Lydia, who had no less a personage than Hercules for a lover, casting his club into the background and his exploits into the shade, employed his mighty strength in spinning wool; nor did he take the pains, I warrant, with any one of his labours that he did with this kill-time employment. You have often heard the saying, Put your shoulder to the wheel, as Hercules did. This identical spinning-wheel is the one always alluded to .- You are aware, Maria, that the great love I bear you is owing to the strong resemblance which you have to my late excellent sister.

Mrs. S. I have heard you say, madam, she was uncom-

monly like yourself.

Mrs. Q. So she might be, my dear; but, you know, one cannot see oneself.

Mrs. S. Except in a glass, madam; but when we approach our climacteric, looking often there, like all repetitions—tire.

Mrs. Q. True, Maria; and a woman don't care to be seen

following the example of a girl.

Mrs. S. Very true, madam; and to look for and not find what a young lass may find, when she takes the trouble or rather the pleasure of looking for, would be somewhat too much for a woman of your years to bear.—[Nature allows us to behold every body but ourselves; Art, however, amply makes up for the deficiency, as the human race appear at present to have self in full view.]

Mrs. Quorum. Ah, my sister was a good domestic woman. She was in the habit, for many years before her death, each night, after the family had retired to rest, to pace, backwards and forwards, every room in the house—so much did she dread fire.

Mrs. S. And the servants say, she took such delight in that method of frightening them in their sleep, when alive, that, for many years after her death, her ghost continued the

practice, to their increased annoyance and horror!

Mrs. Q. To remember what servants say is to forget yourself.—It was she, poor soul, of whom the celebrated Dean of St. Patrick's made honourable mention when he wrote to his Stella thus: "She will not so much as let her picture be alone in a room with a man unless her husband's be with it."

Mrs. S. Lord, madam, your grandmother could hardly

have been contemporary with Dr. Swift.

Mrs. Q. It was my grandmother to whom the compliment was paid. I knew it was one of the family.—Well, Maria, I am delighted at finding you happier than I expected; and to convince you of my sincerity, I will often come and take tea, and every now and then dine, with you: for it is the joy of my heart to behold people contented with the station in life that they may happen to be placed in.

Mrs. S. I believe you sincerely, madam: [for you will not

deign to improve it for them].

Mrs. Q. And as, you know, I make myself welcome wherever I go, indeed quite at home, I intend to give you a variety of presents; so many that, like the animals in the Jardin des Plantes\*, I shall not know this house from my own! I have already looked out a beautiful antique tea tray, in the highest state of preservation. You may remember it; it has been in our family those fifty years. I always placed a high value upon it, and continue to do so, else I would never part with it to you; and, I am sure, you will handle it tenderly for the giver's sake.

Mrs S. [If not for the giver's, we will for the sake of our

cups and saucers.]

Mrs. Q. [Lord! I had nigh forgot what in reality I came about.]—And, Maria, nothing in life could give Mr. Quorum and myself greater pleasure than to have you and Henry come and visit us often. Indeed, I told Mr. Q. I should give you all a general invitation, to come and spend the day with us whenever you have a moment's leisure.—But, as

<sup>\*</sup> In those celebrated gardens, in Paris, the animals are accommodated with the trees, grass, and other productions of their native country.

there is a young lady on a visit with us, who was to have been led to the "High-menial" altar, yesterday, by her intended "lord and master," had she not, very unfortunately, caught the small-pox the evening previous, I am afraid to insist on your calling upon us these six months to comemore especially situated as you are with a houseful of young children.

Mrs. S. [A visit deferred for six months is like a bill in parliament adjourned to the same period: never to be accomplished.]—I don't fear for them on that account, madam.

Mrs. Q. O, niece, what is it you say, or rather, what is it I hear? for I had sooner misapprehend than you be wanting in natural affection. The silly cackling hen spreads her wings to protect her offspring from impending danger.

Mrs. S. I can feel without fearing for them, madam; as there are three of them very far gone in the same complaint

in the next room.

Mrs. Q. O, Lord! I never had it; and I dread it so much, that I am sure to catch it should I stop; and, what is still worse, I have not as yet sat for my picture; and should I be so unfortunate as to take the disorder, the painter's imagination could never portray the teint or contour of the face I had so unguardedly lost. Indeed, I am in such a passion at present, that I am in no fit condition to subdue my features into an amiable good humour for the limner to copy from. Our English painters can supply nothing of their own but the paint, and that is an importation: we have no Rememberaunt, a master who could remember what his beauties were, and forget what the accident of Time made them.

Mrs. S. Stay a minute, aunt, and I'll let you see little Georgiana-Wilhelmina. I hear her just awake. She is the most peevish, petulant of the juvenile portion of the family.

Mrs. Q. (going.) Did you call her after me? I shall never

forget it-[forgive it, I mean.]

Mrs. S. I hope you will recollect, madam, that there is a young lady very ill with the small-pox at home. (Exeunt.

#### ACT V.

# SCENE I.—MR. QUORUM'S HOUSE. Proul and Biddy meeting.

Biddy. Good morning, Proul; you will never speak first now.

Proul. Then I am to blame, Biddy; knowing that you will have the last word. But, to make up for your "good morning," I wish you a "good day." (Going.

Biddy. Ah, you only wanted an opportunity to go.

Proul. Not so, Biddy; and, to convince you of it, I will remain. Allow me, my dear, to take off your bonnet.

Biddy. O, kind sir, it is but one body's business; and, as

I am the nearest to it, I may as well do it myself.

Proul. I should like dearly to have your likeness set in a gold frame well-studded with diamonds.

Biddy. I'll be my share towards it; I'll supply the face if

you provide the frame.

Proul. I know, Biddy, you can put a good face upon any

thing.

Biddy. And I know, Proul, that you can easily frame an excuse for my good face. But what do you want with the picture, when you can put the diamonds into a pair of earnings, present them to me, and receive them back, and the original as their bearer.

Proul. I have too much honour to take back a present.

Biddy. Had I been as handsome as my young lady, you'd love and court me, and give me presents, as her lovers do.

Proul. You mistake, Biddy. I am quite a philosopher in beauty. I am for an arm-full of it. None of your delicate, wishey-washy, lathy, consumptive, simpering seamstresses for me; but a wholesome country wench, like you, you slut, who have plenty of flesh and blood to cover the machinery of womankind.

Biddy. Indeed? But you says nothing to the ornamental

qualifications.

Proul. No; you says that for me. I am all for solid, chubby charms.

"I take her body, you her mind, Which has the better bargain?"

I content myself, Biddy, by thinking that you have as much beauty as a race-course of belles. If you could dispose of the red on your rosy cheeks and stout arms, you would damn the roguish rouge-trade of France for the next twelve months; and, as a proof that you would if you could, I have known your lovely ringlets commit dreadful havoc where you dare not show your nose. But, Biddy, diamonds are too brilliant baubles to pass between such poor devils of the lower regions as we are; what less will do duty for them? Suppose I buy you a good warm shawl; will you wear it for my sake?

Biddy. Lovers formerly would prefer to behold and admire their sweethearts' charms, rather than cover them up and never look upon them at all; but now they serve them as they would mummeries: they bandage them up as though they were not to be opened for three thousand years. Shawls are comfortable things enough when we get beyond the frozen latitude of forty: for then we pretend to cover with them what we cannot, by their absence, exhibit.

Proul. Candid enough.

Biddy. But, Proul, now that you have returned, when will you make me happy?

Proul. I tell you there is no good in rash promises. I think I must decline the honour.

Biddy. Then I'll despair—and die.

Proul. Poo, leave dying to those who are tired of living; and let us not talk of dying who never lived at all. If you are in sorrow, or rather want the incredulous world to believe so, go and dye your yellow gown black. If that will not convince the dubious crew of your grief, you can't entirely fail, for you can buy a new one at the year's end out of what you should otherwise pay for washing the old one.

Biddy. I was but joking about dying, Proul; for on the merits of the renewal of our acquaintance, I got the banns put up, and next sabbath will be the last day of asking.

Proul. And to-day Saturday.—[Now would I turn Jew for

one week's liberty.]

Biddy. But be very careful, Proul, lest you should be married to any other lass. I mention it now, to keep you out of trouble afterwards; as, you know, it is felony to intermarry with a maid while your first wife is alive.

Proul. I like that law; a man should always inter his first

wife before he offers to marry the second.

Biddy. We'll talk more about it over our tea. Proul. I left off tea diet—Tea is slow poison.

Biddy. O, you are all for coffee; as you have it not only boiled but roasted also.

*Proul.* No; but I can talk nothing but scandal over tea; so we may as well turn over our future prospects now. We'll set up a public-house.

Biddy. Yes, and I'll be Cherry.

Proul. Cherry and the Fair Star, Cherry Ripe, or—Cherry Bounce?

Biddy. No; Cherry, the barmaid.

• Proul. No, that won't do. Every body has a kiss at the barmaid; and I will not allow my Cherry to be made two bites of.

Biddy. Very well, then I'll rule the roast, for I am tired of servitude.

Proul. So am I; and when I think of mine, I grow melan-

choly. A man of spirit would never be a menial if he knew the pain it gives to wait behind a chair at table, like a statue at large bound to keep the peace; to reply when spoken to; to pretend deafness unless addressed; to hear a dandy coxcomb spoil a good anecdote in relating it, and not be allowed to laugh at his ignorance; to stand erect behind a coach, as stiff as the clouded cane he carries; and to open the door, and form his arm into a crutch, for those who can make much better use of their legs than he can of his.

Biddy. Agreed. Tell me now about Mr. Whine.

Proul. He's gone to the River Styx, I believe; our Cerberus held him by the heel. I'm tired of the fellow.

# SCENE II .- THE SAME.

Mr. and Mrs. Quorum.

Mr. Quorum. Well, my dear, have you made any inquiries

for poor Maria and her husband?

Mrs. Quorum. Every where—of every human being. High and low have been searched; rich and poor have been asked -and no more tidings of them than of last year's fog. Every attempt at finding them has been resorted to, except that of sending the bell-man about and advertising them in the public papers as strays. Were a rich relation obliging enough to die intestate, some of the next-of-kin people might rummage them out.

Mr. Q. I'm inclined to think so; as I have been pretty diligent myself in my inquiries. But that's not very strange,

this London is a world of a place.

Mrs. Q. A universe to what it was. Indeed, Gilbert's lady-love should resort to some other expedient, now a days, to discover her spark, than that of strolling the streets and

calling upon his Christian name\*.

Mr. Q. I was more fortunate myself in my search after Townsend, a quarter of a century ago, (when I was [not] on my travels to fight a duel) than she would be now, were she to resume her inquiries.

Mrs. Q. Would you really wish to serve your relative?

Mr. Q. Undoubtedly I should.

Mrs. Q. Then give over that foolish proposition of paying off your share of the national debt, and bring in a bill for a general oblivion of all individual debts whatever; for I make no doubt but that he is at this moment going the rounds of every gaol in the kingdom.

Mr. Q. You banter me, madam?

<sup>\*</sup> Vide Percy Anecdotes-Fidelity, edited by the late Thomas Byerly, Esq.

Mrs. Q. I do; but I will not. Let them stick to their nourishment; they made their bed, let them lie in it.

Mr. Q. 'Tis true they did so; and it may be equally true that they should be punished for their conduct, as an example to future disobedience; but as our forgiveness of enemies is the groundword of our eternal hope, it is a new doctrine—not to forgive our friends.

(Exeunt.

#### SCENE III.-MR. QUORUM'S GARDEN.

Mirafair and Belinda.

#### Belinda.

You found me out, love, in my lonely walk, When I supposed unknown was my retreat; But who could better on my ponderings break Than he who was the subject of my rev'ry? You promise fair; and to support fair words With deeds as fair, and means so weak, Requireth much exertion.

Mirafair.

I'll come, my love, with more than lightning's haste; Yes, come like it; but, unlike it, I'll stay, With love as warm and not so quickly cooled.

### Belinda.

Take care you don't too much resemble it:
I fear a cold conductor may entice
Your love, though warm, into a lonesome wild;
And, as it leaves the lightning, so desert
Its hapless victim, when, like it, its beams
Are, as its dark deluder, iron cold.
Beware of such: If she who strikes Love's flint,
Sit not close by till ev'ry ember's out,
Some cold rude blast its latent warmth may rouse:
For all re-lighting what should burn for one.

Mirafair.

I'll be as watchful and as true a guard
As thy dear eye-lid to thy jet-black eye
When any missile rude its sight assails.
Yes, with its swiftness I'll await on thee,
And muse, enraptured, on thy placid smile,
Waiting impatient till I know the cause,
'That I may in my love's delight partake.
No language can the feelings well express.
My conduct shall be pure as your sweet smile
While strangers trace my semblance in your son.

(Excunt.

## SCENE IV .-- MR. QUORUM'S HOUSE.

## Mr. and Mrs. Quorum.

Mrs. Quorum. My dear, I have returned from paying a few very pressing visits in Park-lane.

Mr. Quorum. It were better you were paying a few debts

in Cheapside.

- Mrs. Q. I shall do both: the last I will do by deputy—you shall be my locum tenens. It will give you an opportunity of seeing all the city warehouses without purchasing any of their commodities: such a happiness you long wished for.
- Mr. Q. Zounds, madam, did you contract them by deputy; did you wear them by deputy; and if so, who was your locum tenens?
- Mrs. Q. You speak as though I could have every thing my own way. Were servants admitted into Kensington Gardens, would I, think you, wear a bed of artificial flowers on my poor weak head?
- Mr. Q. I believe you would bear a castle like an elephant, but that, like him, you would be obliged to stoop, to receive

your lading.

- Mrs. Q. As it is, I have serious thoughts of distinguishing my visit to the metropolis by having a plume of ostrich feathers borne before me wherever I go—the fashion would be followed.
- Mr. Q. Its want of originality would militate against it. You would have your walks through London as splendidly preceded as your journey to the tomb will be one of these days.—I had a strange dream last night.

Mrs. Q. There's nothing very strange in that: the effect

of the Lord Mayor's dinner, I suppose.

Mr. Q. I was troubled in my sleep about an old tea-board that we had in use somewhat about thirty years ago.

Mrs. Q. I knew it was something in the eating way. And did not you dream enough about it last night, but you must

continue the delusion throughout the day?

- Mr. Q. Why, I wish I could get it out of my head. Besides, it being such an old-maid kind of an implement, I can hardly persuade myself to be capable of dreaming of it at all. Were I once assured that the interest it excites in my mind proceeded from a dream, in a dream it assuredly should end.
- Mrs. Q O, it was a dream and nothing more; for you spoke of it several times, in your sleep, to my knowledge. Why, it was an old trumpery piece of frippery, and only fit

to burn. I believe it was the first thing of the kind that was made in England.

Mr. Q. I am willing to believe it was, and to take your

word for it also, as you must know.

Mrs. Q. I do not speak from memory, but appearance. I prefer looking forward to time to come, rather than remember

days that have vanished.

Mr. Q. Nay, do not speak lightly of years gone by—I am sure they did not treat you with contempt.—But I desire now to use this relic, rather than abuse it, old as it is, though it has had enough of both lately. You know you yourself sometimes long for a rarity, which you will not be long without, if money can at all help you towards the possessing it. I think I have somehow or somewhere caught the contagion, but with this difference, that mine is unaccompanied by expense, as I have taken a fancy to have breakfast off that same teaboard this morning; and you will much please me by giving the servant orders, so that my wish may be complied with.

Mrs. Q. I fear I cannot, my dear; and, now that I think on it, we left it behind us in the lumber-room, in the out-

house, at our seat in Somersetshire.

Mr. Q. Indeed, I beg your pardon. I positively know it came up to town in the luggage-cart; for I told the driver, on the road, to push the end of it in that was protruding out.

Mrs. Q. Then I lay my life he paid no attention to what you said, and it worked its way out altogether: being oval, it was particularly adapted for doing so; and he is a good-fornothing sot.

Mr. Q. O, no, it did not: for I recollect perfectly well seeing it abroad at the gate afterwards! I remember this last circumstance as distinctly as though I saw it five minutes ago!

Mrs. Q. [I would you did see it so lately.]—Why, my dear, to tell you the truth, when we arrived in town, I was afraid lest such a tasteless, antiquated piece of furniture should be found in our possession: so I gave directions that it should be burned out of the way; and it actually was burned.

Mr. Q. Why, madam had you stolen the unfortunate teaboard, you could not have observed a more strict or effectual precaution with regard to concealing it. You might easily have kept it from public view: it could then no more tell the world from whence it came, where it was, or to whom it belonged, than its fellow piece of lumber, the old ricketty dumbwaiter. If you kept the tea-board away from the scene of "the feast of reason and the flow of soul," its weight could neither make "the table groan," nor its antiquated fashion "set the table on a roar!" Mrs. Q. My dear, you remind me of some news that will delight you. I have just heard that Lady Causeway's daughter (who has been dumb, you know, from her cradle) has, all of a sudden, got the use of her tongue, and speaks uncommonly

well, considering the short practice she has had.

Mr. Q. Pshaw. Now that she does speak, she has nothing to tell us that we did not know before (Recollecting himself.)

To be sure, while deaf, she was not dumb; so she may now highly charm a grateful world by relating all the scandals that were uttered, in perfect security, under her eye. At all events, when she arrives at womanhood, she will, of her own accord, amply make up for all the silence with which she blessed the world in her nonage.—It is, however, all digression, all evasion—equivocation.—Perhaps, your incendiary commands were not immediately complied with: so, if you will inform me who undertook to burn the tea-board, your information may throw some light upon the subject.

Mrs. Q. I beheld it blazing with my own eyes!

Mr. Q. Well, so long as you do not say that you committed it to the flames yourself, I still will hope that you were imposed upon, and that some other old warped piece of timber was made a blaze of, to satisfy your refined notions of taste; and you will much oblige me by saying who it was that you commissioned.

Mrs. Q. It was that worthless fellow that we just turned off.

Mr. Q. [I doubt that: as he has not as yet got a character from me, and he will hardly get a master without one—but I shall soon see.]—O, then, there is some hope that I shall be able to gratify my desire, foolish as it may appear: as a gentleman who wishes to engage Usquebaugh called last night, when I was from home, and left word that he would wait upon me again this morning; so that if he has not destroyed it, all will be well again.

Mrs. Q. [Indeed, then all will not be so very well with me, though |—My dear, did I say, The servant that has lately left

us ?

Mr. Q. Or, That worthless fellow that we just turned off.

Mrs. Q. Why, then, I did not mean it.

Mr. Q. Then, madam, what is it that you did mean?

Mrs. Q. [What an unlucky dream. I had better have told him the truth at once.]—Why, my dear, I concealed the fact thus long purely upon principles of religion.

Mr. Q. Zounds, madam, what has two or three painted boards glued together to do with religion? I suppose you got a sermon written on it, to keep company with A Medita-

tion upon a Broomstick. The title, A Moral Discourse on an old Wooden Tea-board: It would draw together all the tabbies of the parish. O, if the tea-board itself had the use of speech, how soon it would speak the Honble. Miss Causeway dumb again.

Mrs. Q. Lord! Mr. Quorum, A Meditation upon a Broom-

stick is not a sermon.

Mr. Q. Pshaw, it is all one. Has it not answered the

same ends, and was it not written by a priest?

Mrs. Q. I have done better by the tea-tray than I say. The whole truth is this: My heart has been moved lately, by the deplorable condition of a certain family in this town. which, though entirely unworthy of all the world's notice, you partly perceive did not escape mine; and I have been in the habit of bestowing several very large sums of money upon them, from time to time, which, no doubt, were considered by you to have been squandered upon the extravagances and extravaganzas of fashionable life. But, well knowing, from the excellent education which I received in my youthand I often compliment myself on the retentiveness of my memory in remembering it so long-well knowing, I was remarking, that charity would at once become unworthy the appellation when blazoned forth to the world, I never once divulged the commission of my guilt-of my gift, I should say; no, not even to you, my dear-you know the "right hand" and the "left hand."

Mr. Q. Yes, yes; children, who do not know one from the other, know that. But now that we have had "the truth" and "the whole truth," if there be any difference, let us next

have "nothing but the truth."

Mrs. Q. Well, you see how good deeds will shine forth as well as bad ones, in spite of all human efforts to conceal them; and you have been witness yourself how long and how obstinately I held out, until I could hold out no longer; and, also, how traly wonderful that Providence should inform you in a dream of this very charity of mine; which, I fear, will but serve as a link or clue to a long list of donations, that I would rather never see the light; for, among a countless number of gifts to the same forlorn family, I gave the old tea-tray which is the subject of our present pleasant conversation.—[Where the deuce am I running to?]—But don't press me, pray don't. You know it takes all the merit away, as I said once or twice

before, to make a boast of our good deeds, just in the same manner that it doubles the guilt of our bad deeds to conceal

or deny the crimes.

Mr. Q. I ask you nothing about your good deeds—nothing. I once more entreat you to tell me what you know of the teaboard. It is not worth having; so there is not much merit in the gift, known or unknown.

Mrs. Q. Ah, but the person who has it, in mentioning that one gift, cannot, decently, let slip the opportunity of showing his gratitude, by serving up on it all the other obligations

which he lies under to me.

Mr. Q. Perhaps he can't do otherwise.

Mrs. Q: Not well. It is so closely connected with others of far greater importance, that he cannot exhibit it empty. He cannot help weighing it down by the costly set of china, the massy service of plate, et ceters, with which I presented

him on his marriage.

Mr. Q. I will ask him for nothing but the tea-board; I will even request him to keep back the crockery-ware, if that will please you.—But I can gather from what you say, that the person whom you have often assisted with your purse now possesses this Pompeii of a former age.

Mrs. Q. True, upon my life.

Mr. Q. I commend you for your secrecy, madam; and there now remains only one word to set all at rest again—the name of the person who has deserved so kindly at your hands; for he is the most ungrateful wretch, whoever he be, that Ingratitude has as yet marshalled in its ranks.

Mrs. Q. Why, you alarm me: it was to your nephew,

Henry, I gave the tea-tray.

Mr. Q. What, he whom the bell-man, stray-advertisement, next-of-kin office, or, I suppose, the Hue and Cry could hardly ferrit out. Why, he is the worthiest dog of his name this day in Christendom, wherever the remainder of the family may be; and he is, for that one frolic, forgiven every thing.

Mrs. Q. Why, now you astonish me.

Mr. Q. Not yet. Go down stairs; get into the street by the back-door; for you cannot very conveniently do so by the hall-door; and there you may view the identical teaboard that, to your knowledge, I spoke about several times in my sleep—that, five minutes since, was in a lumber-room in Somersetshire—and that you once beheld in a blaze—keeping the two monstrous jaws of the ponderous gate as fast together as two twelvepenny nails can hold them!

Mrs. Q. O, the villain.

Mr. Q. I'll visit my nephew myself, and bring him here; and as I freely forgive you, madam, for your foolish duplicity towards me, let me request of you, also, to forgive him.

(Excunt.

#### SCENE V .- THE SAME.

Mrs. Quorum, and Mr. Mirafair disguised as a Doctor.

Mrs. Quorum. Now, Mr. Mad-Doctor, as I told you, my dutiful daughter has returned from the Scotch Vulcan, with her precious spark red hot from his heathenish forge; so I hope you are an adept at a lunatico inquirendo cause?

Mr. Mirafair. It is so admirably managed, madam, that should the eleven architects (whose estimates for building the Royal Exchange were rejected) with the successful candidate as their foreman be empanelled on the jury, they must province on this

unanimously agree on this.

Mrs. Q. I hope it is perfectly law-tight?

Mr. M. Every nook and cranny and flaw of justice, madam, is caulked up with the oakum of law. There is not a venthole of plausibility that we have not an equity-peg to stop it up with. But, madam, if there be any grounds at all for this action, a few frantic particulars or mad circumstances would be of vast consequence—a little truth, though never so little. What signs of insanity has the lady exhibited?

Mrs. Q. O, she has the most preposterous sayings, and does the most extravagant things. One day, she would not allow the little sweep to ascend the chimney, lest he should never

come down again; another day—But here she comes.

(Enter Belinda.)

Mr. Q. Madam, pray tell me what o'clock it is.—(handing her his watch.)

Belinda.

Could but our temper move like this machine, Not urged by passion, nor delayed by spleen; But true to Nature's regulating power, By virtuous acts distinguish every hour: Then health and joy would follow, as they ought, The rule of motion and the law of thought: Sweet health to pass the present moment o'er, To everlasting joy, when time shall be no more.

(Enter Mr. Quorum and Mr. and Mrs. Stipend.)

Mr. Quorum. Where is this Mad-Doctor. Well, sir, what report do you make?

Mr. Q. (throwing off his disquise.) That this lady, sir, is not fit to manage her own affairs; and, consequently, I desire to join her in the administration.

Mr. Q. The administration. Now, that every thing is settled, I may retire to the farewel conference of my

"BASE, BRUTAL, AND -" FRIENDS.



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